

Paramount

RUMPY

("Cascarrabias")

ACE HODGES and T. WIGNEY PERCYVAL

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GRUMPY

A Play in Four Acts

BY

HORACE HODGES

AND

T. WIGNEY PERCYVAL

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GRUMPY

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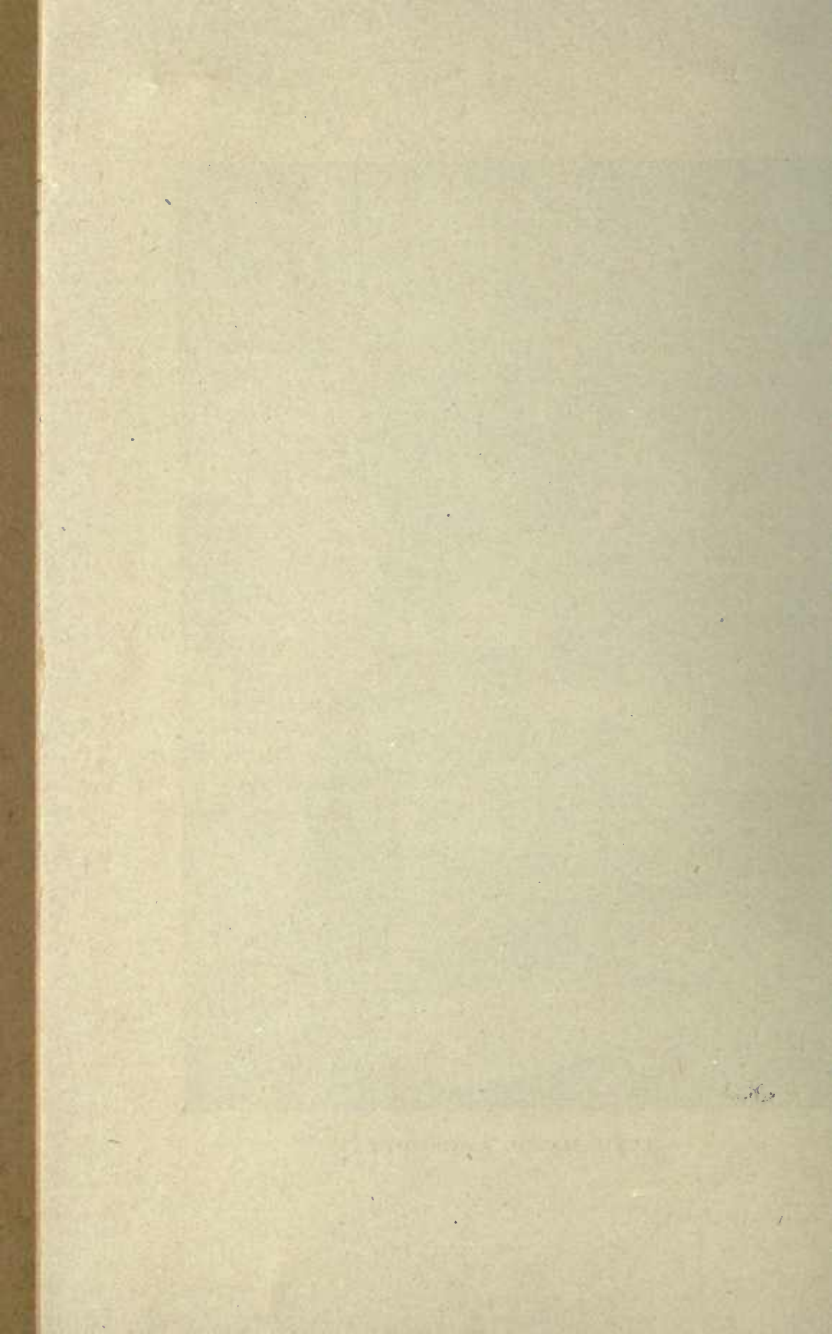
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CYRIL MAUDE AS GRUMPY

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GRUMPY

Originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, on September 19, 1913, and afterwards played at the New Theatre, London, on May 13, 1914, with the following cast of characters :—

MR. ANDREW BULLIVANT	. . . . .	<i>Mr. Cyril Maude.</i>
MR. ERNEST HEON (his grand-nephew)	. . . . .	<i>Mr. Edward Combermere</i>
RUDDOCK (his valet)	. . . . .	<i>Mr. John Harwood.</i>
MR. JARVIS	. . . . .	<i>Mr. Montague Love.</i>
MR. VALENTINE WOLFE	. . . . .	<i>Mr. Lennox Pawle.</i>
DR. MACLAREN	. . . . .	<i>Mr. Hunter Nesbitt</i>
KEBLE	. . . . .	<i>Mr. Arthur Curtis.</i>
MERRIDEW	. . . . .	<i>Mr. James Dale.</i>
DAWSON	. . . . .	<i>Mr. O. Hylton.</i>
VIRGINIA BULLIVANT (Mr. Bullivant's grand-daughter)	. . . . .	<i>Miss Margery Maude.</i>
MRS. MACLAREN	. . . . .	<i>Miss Margaret Swallona</i>
SUSAN	. . . . .	<i>Miss Maud Andrea.</i>

ACTS 1, 2 and 4.—*The Library at Mr. Bullivant's.*

ACT 3.—*Mr. Jarvis's Rooms in London.*

THE FOLLOWING IS A COPY OF THE PROGRAMME OF THE
FIRST PERFORMANCE OF "GRUMPY"

WALLACK'S THEATRE, NEW YORK

NOVEMBER 24, 1913

MESSRS. LIEBLER & COMPANY

PRESENT

GRUMPY

A Play in Four Acts by HORACE HODGES and
T. WIGNEY PERCYVAL

THE CAST

Mr. Andrew Bullivant (Grumpy).....	<i>Cyril Maude</i>
Mr. Ernest Heron.....	<i>Edw. Combermere</i>
Ruddock.....	<i>John Harwood</i>
Mr. Jarvis.....	<i>Montagu Love</i>
Mr. Isaac Wolfe.....	<i>Lennox Pawle</i>
Dr. Maclaren.....	<i>Hunter Nesbitt</i>
Keble.....	<i>Arthur Curtis</i>
Merridew.....	<i>James Dale</i>
Dawson.....	<i>Percival Young</i>
Virginia Bullivant.....	<i>Margery Maude</i>
Mrs. Maclaren.....	<i>Lena Halliday</i>
Susan.....	<i>Maud Andrew</i>

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

- ACT. I The Library at Mr. Bullivant's.
ACT. II The Same Room as at the End of Act I.
ACT. III Mr. Jarvis's Rooms in London.
ACT. IV The Same as Acts I and II.

GRUMPY

ACT I

The SCENE is the library at Mr. BULLIVANT's. A plan of the room and of the arrangement of the furniture is given at the end of the play. The furniture consists of solid early Victorian mahogany pieces.

(MRS. MACLAREN enters R., and goes to the music-cabinet below fire-place down L. As soon as she gets there VIRGINIA enters R. and crosses to table. MRS. MACLAREN goes up to table.)

VIRGINIA. Well, have you found it?

MRS. MACLAREN. No, last week's, wasn't it?

VIRGINIA. I think he said so.

MRS. MACLAREN. It must be a wonderful article, and he's such a fascinating man.

VIRGINIA. I'm glad you like him, Mrs. Maclaren—I'm sure it's among these somewhere. (*Going down to music-cabinet and kneeling.*)

MRS. MACLAREN (*moves to table and looks at papers*). I don't know when I've met anyone so interesting. He's been everywhere, done everything, and seems to know every one worth knowing.

VIRGINIA. Yes, he is nice, isn't he?

MRS. MACLAREN. Where did you meet him, Virginia?

VIRGINIA. At Aunt Sophie's. (*Takes several copies of "Spectator" out of music-cabinet.*)

MRS. MACLAREN. It's wonderful how your aunt always manages to collect interesting people. I've quite lost my heart to Mr. Jarvis. He somehow makes you feel that you are attractive and interesting, and that's such an art, my dear. . . . Men nowadays are so matter-of-fact. They expect you to like them without any effort on their part to make themselves agreeable.

VIRGINIA. Yes, he is different, isn't he?

MRS. MACLAREN. You mustn't let him make himself too agreeable to you, Virginia; what would Mr. Heron have to say about it? (*Sitting on L. end of table.*)

VIRGINIA. Oh, dear old Ernest, why, he's a sort of cousin.

MRS. MACLAREN. Yes—about forty times removed—and he's very fond of you, you know.

VIRGINIA. Yes, in his matter-of-fact way, I suppose he is, but he does rather take me for granted. You'd never catch Ernest

making you feel that you're attractive and interesting. (*With a little laugh.*) There's no art about Ernest. You should see his letters from South Africa!

MRS. MACLAREN. Oh! Ginnie!

VIRGINIA. You might just as well—they certainly aren't love letters!

MRS. MACLAREN. No, my dear, Ernest isn't that sort, but he's a very good sort all the same.

VIRGINIA. Ah, here it is. "The Psychology of the Orient," J. H. Jarvis.

MRS. MACLAREN (*coming to VIRGINIA*). Isn't he clever!

(*VIRGINIA gives her the paper and rises.*)

VIRGINIA. You won't forget to let me have it back, will you? (*Putting papers back in music-cabinet.*)

MRS. MACLAREN (*sits L.C., below table*). Oh no, I know what your grandfather is about his weeklies.

VIRGINIA (*going to MRS. MACLAREN*). Yes, if he happened to want that particular number, and it wasn't in its proper place, he'd make no end of a fuss—the old dear.

(*DR. MACLAREN enters R.*)

DR. MACLAREN (*comes to below settee*). Ah! Well, that Mr. Jarvis is really most charming, and I must say it has been a delightful experience to meet a man outside of our profession so appreciative of what we doctors are trying to do. (*To MRS. MACLAREN—taking out his watch.*) Now, my dear, it's nearly midnight—we have a long drive home, you know.

MRS. MACLAREN. Oh, is it as late as that? I must go and put my things on at once. (*Moves to below settee.*)

DR. MACLAREN. Yes, come along! (*Goes and opens door.*)

MRS. MACLAREN. You know, Virginia, I'm very disappointed at not seeing your grandfather. Give him my love, and tell him that I shall drive over some day soon—in the afternoon, when I shall be sure of finding him about. (*Crosses to door.*)

VIRGINIA. Oh yes, do.

DR. MACLAREN. Oh, Mr. Bullivant doesn't want to be bothered with women.

MRS. MACLAREN. Oh, but he's rather fond of me—he's always so charming whenever we meet.

VIRGINIA. I'm quite sure he'd be charming to you, Mrs. Maclaren.

MRS. MACLAREN. There—you see, James! (*Turning to DR. MACLAREN.*)

DR. MACLAREN (*holding door open*). Take care, Miss Virginia; you'd be turning my wife's head and make her think me even more stupid than I am really.

(*Enter KEBLE, door up L., looking for something.*)

MRS. MACLAREN. Oh, I'm sure she couldn't do that, my dear—I mean—— (*Goes out.*)

VIRGINIA. Are you looking for something, Keble? (*Turns to KEBLE.*)

KEBLE. Mr. Jarvis's cap, miss.

VIRGINIA. Oh yes, you're going ahead of Mr. Jarvis by the last train to-night, aren't you?

KEBLE. Yes, miss.

MRS. MACLAREN (*off*). Virginia!!

VIRGINIA. I'm coming.

(*Exits R., followed by DR. MACLAREN, who closes door. Enter SUSAN, up L. KEBLE is now C.*)

SUSAN (*who is carrying a cap*). I say, this is Mr. Jarvis's, isn't it?

KEBLE. Ah—there it is, that's what I was looking for. (*He takes it from her and puts it down on settee R. when he speaks to her. SUSAN goes to top of table and arranges papers.*) Sue?

SUSAN (*coming down C.*). What do you want?

KEBLE. My answer—answer to my question. I'm takin' the governor's things up to town to-night—I might not have a chance o' seeing you again.

SUSAN. Oh, we haven't known each other very long.

KEBLE. There isn't somebody else?

SUSAN. I've told you there isn't——

KEBLE. Ah, but——

SUSAN. I'm fond of young men and all that——

KEBLE. And as soon as my back's turned I s'pose there will be some one else. Come, say you will.

SUSAN (*L. of table*). Oh, I don't mean to be unkind, William, but I must think of things. What are we going to marry on? I like you well enough, you know that, but how could we marry—yet, No, I won't promise.

(*KEBLE is down R. of table.*)

KEBLE (*loftily*). All right—remember I'm going to-night.

SUSAN. Make a little more money—enough to keep us comfortable—and I will. (*Offers her hands.*)

KEBLE (*goes to her and takes her hands*). You mean it? I'd do anything to get hold of you. If I come across some money. . . . Here, look here, Sue, I'll be at that window later.

SUSAN. No, you mustn't. (*Turns away.*)

KEBLE. Now, look here, Sue dear——

SUSAN. Don't call me dear.

KEBLE. There is some one else.

SUSAN. Oh, there's plenty of nice young men around.

KEBLE. Now I s'pose you're trying to make me jealous—well, you can't.

SUSAN. Oh, can't I?

KEBLE. No, and don't you try to.

SUSAN. Why, what would you do if I did?

KEBLE. There's no knowing what I'd do. Come on; say "yes."
"Yes, soon."

(Enter DAWSON R., showing in ERNEST. KEBLE goes up C. ERNEST is a big, roughish Britisher—a touch of the Colonies; easy-going, a trifle noisy; good-natured and perfectly well-bred; altogether a jolly sort of fellow, in a well-worn lounge suit.)

DAWSON (standing at door). I will inform Mr. Bullivant, sir.

ERNEST. Thank you.

(DAWSON goes out R. KEBLE goes round up stage and works down to R.)

ERNEST (joyfully). Hallo, Susan!

SUSAN (in surprise—coming to ERNEST). Mr. Ernest! Why, wherever have you sprung from, sir?

(ERNEST, taking both SUSAN's hands enthusiastically, gazes at her in admiration.)

ERNEST. Susan, my dear, you're better-looking than ever!

(KEBLE is now up by settee.)

SUSAN. But where have you come from, sir?

ERNEST. Never mind where I've come from—I hope you're half as glad to see me as I am to see you.

(Exit KEBLE, down R.)

Susan, you are a picture. I've half a mind—— (Feigns to kiss her.)

SUSAN. Mr. Ernest, you're worse than you were before you went away.

ERNEST. The older I grow, Susan, the more I love your pretty face.

SUSAN (laughing). Oh, Mr. Ernest! (Backing from him.)

ERNEST. Upon my soul I do, Susan! Anyone stopping here? How are they all, eh?

SUSAN. Only Mr. Jarvis, sir. Oh, Dr. Maclaren's dining here, too.

ERNEST. Dr. Maclaren—but, Jarvis—Jarvis? (Moving R.) Don't seem to remember him.

SUSAN (L.C.). Miss Virginia met him in London some little time ago; then the master met him, and then—well, the other day he came down here. (Up by L. of table C.)

ERNEST (C.). Attracted by Miss Virginia?

(SUSAN does not reply, and turns slightly away.)

Susan, you've got into a bad habit. You're sly.

SUSAN. Mr. Ernest, I'm not. (Turning sharply.)

ERNEST. There's something going on at the back of your brain, and you're not telling me what it is. What is it?

SUSAN. Well, you won't tell anybody? (*Arranging flowers.*)

ERNEST. Not a soul.

SUSAN. Well, Miss Virginia—is a little bit——

ERNEST. Yes?

SUSAN. Attracted by him.

ERNEST. Jarvis, Jarvis, eh! What does Grumpy think about it?

SUSAN. He doesn't seem to notice anything.

ERNEST. Oh, don't tell me a clever old criminal lawyer like Grumpy—doesn't notice it. (*Moving to R., and taking coat off.*) That must be stopped.

SUSAN. Perhaps your coming back will do it. Well, you've been a long time away, and after all, Miss Virginia is very young. (*At mantelpiece with flowers.*)

ERNEST (*thoughtfully*). How is the dear old man? Bad-tempered as ever? (*Throws overcoat on settee.*)

SUSAN (*laughing—gets L.C.*). Worse. Everything has to be in apple-pie order, or else—an explosion!

ERNEST (*laughing, goes up C., and back to table*). By George, I'd like to make hay of this room just to see what would happen. (*Sits on L. end of table, C.*) You must all be having a lively time down here. (*Takes up Bradshaw.*)

SUSAN. We don't take any notice of it.

ERNEST. Ah, his heart's in the right place, Susan. Eh?

SUSAN (*coming up to table to ERNEST*). There's times, when he's firing out at me, when I'd just like to take him in my arms and give him a good kiss.

ERNEST (*laughing heartily*). Ha, ha! why don't you do it, Susan?

SUSAN. I would if I wasn't afraid. (*Leans on chair L. of table.*)

ERNEST (*after laughing, suddenly suppressing his mirth*). Supposing I fired out at you—would you be afraid of me?

SUSAN. I should box your ears, Mr. Ernest. (*Laughs.*)

ERNEST. Would you, by Jove! (*Rises.*) Here, I say, I must tidy up a bit. I suppose they're dressed?

SUSAN. Yes, sir.

ERNEST. Dear, dear! This won't do. Give me a brush down, Susan.

(*SUSAN brushes ERNEST with her hand as he turns round. He crosses her to fire and looks in glass on mantelpiece.*)

SUSAN. Oh, you're not so dusty, sir. Well, I can't brush you if you don't keep still.

ERNEST (*coming down to SUSAN*). Look at my tie. Be a good girl—tie me a nice bow.

(*SUSAN ties his necktie for him.*)

(*As though about to kiss her.*) I've a jolly good mind to

(*SUSAN pushes him off—busy with the tie*)

SUSAN. Don't be so silly. There! There's a nice bow.

(*ERNEST turns to fire-place and looks in glass on mantel.*)

ERNEST. Now, let me see. Susan, you're an artist—tie all right—clothes—(*Looking down at his rough clothes*)—well, pretty right—boots a bit dusty, eh? (*Wipes boots on trousers.*)

SUSAN. Oh, Mr. Ernest, you are—

ERNEST (*goes up to L.C. Carelessly picks a camelia from plant on L. of windows*). I say, I must smarten up a bit.

SUSAN. Oh, Mr. Ernest, what are you doing? (*Going up c.*)

ERNEST. What's the matter?

SUSAN. That's Mr. Bullivant's pet plant. My goodness! You'll catch it, sir!

ERNEST. Good Lord! Is it? He'll kick up a deuce of a row; it'll do me good to hear him again though, Susan, and when it's all over he'd give me the whole tree if he thought I wanted it. A little bit of cotton to tie it up.

SUSAN. There isn't any here, Mr. Ernest—but I'll fetch some. (*Crosses L. to door up L.*)

ERNEST. No, no, don't bother to fetch it; perhaps I've got a bit of string or something.

(*Enter KEBLE R. SUSAN turns and sees him.*)

SUSAN. I suppose this wouldn't do, would it? (*Pulling out a hair and glancing at KEBLE.*)

ERNEST. Of course it will, Susan, splendidly—a hair—a simple hair.

(*KEBLE observes ERNEST and SUSAN. He picks up cap.*)

We will dispense with the cotton, Susan, and we will tie up this camelia with a silken hair from your beautiful head.

(*KEBLE goes up to back and puts cap in bag. SUSAN just glances at him, unnoticed by ERNEST, and laughs.*)

There, now, don't giggle—do what I tell you. Here's the leaf.

(*KEBLE comes down R., bag in L. hand.*)

SUSAN (*laughing*). Oh, a long time that will hold together!

ERNEST (*busy binding the hair round the stem of the flower*). Now be very careful—(*Holding the camelia to SUSAN.*) Now tie the knot.

(*They are now both very intent on the camelia.*)

SUSAN. You want eyes for this job—there!

(KEBLE is down R., watching.)

ERNEST. Let me see . . . excellent, Susan!

SUSAN. I don't believe it'll come undone.

(KEBLE exits down R.)

ERNEST. No, it'll stay there for ever! (*Putting flower carefully in his coat.*)

(*As KEBLE goes, SUSAN glances at him and again laughs; crosses R. to front of settee.*)

What are you laughing at?

SUSAN. I'd like to know what somebody would say to all this.

ERNEST. Who? (*Coming down R. to her.*)

SUSAN (*loftily*). Oh, somebody I know. (*Getting to door.*)

ERNEST. Really?

SUSAN. Why not, Mr. Ernest?

ERNEST. Who is it, Susan?

(MR. BULLIVANT is heard outside.)

(SUSAN hears MR. BULLIVANT and exits R.)

MR. BULLIVANT (*off*). How many times am I to speak about this? I will not have trays placed on that polished table!

ERNEST. Ah—Grumpy! Good old Grumpy! God bless him! (*Is down R.*)

(MR. BULLIVANT enters up L. *He is a very fussy old gentleman. A little old-fashioned, storming at everybody one moment, all heart the next. He enters grumbling at MERRIDEW, the footman, who follows him in.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Understand, if you please, I will have my orders carried out. (*Seeing ERNEST.*) Ah, Ernest! What on earth brings you here? I didn't even know you were in England. Merridew—Merridew! It is extraordinary how many times I have to speak of every little thing!

MERRIDEW. Very sorry, sir!

MR. BULLIVANT. Quiet, quiet—don't make a noise. Where are they? In the drawing-room?

MERRIDEW. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Quiet—quiet! I don't wish them to know I'm downstairs. (*To MERRIDEW.*) Well, Ernest, what's wrong? (*To ERNEST.*) You're in some scrape I suppose? (*Dropping down L. a little.*) Merridew, who is responsible for having my chimney swept?

MERRIDEW (*behind table C.*). Dawson, sir. (*Crosses to R.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, send him to me. My study is unbearable—can't sit in it—

MERRIDEW. Well, sir, I've spoken——

MR. BULLIVANT. Quiet! Quiet!

MERRIDEW. I've spoken again——

MR. BULLIVANT. Quiet, quiet, quiet! That will do. Be sure no one knows I am downstairs.

(MERRIDEW goes off R.)

Well, well? Some scrape, I suppose? What is it? What is it?
(Going to fire-place.)

ERNEST (*heartily, moving L.C.*). How are you, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. How am I? Why, I'm very well. How do you suppose I am? Now, then, come on, what is it? Money? Money, I suppose? You wouldn't come here in the middle of the night, without letting anyone know, unless you were in some difficulty. What is it?

ERNEST (*seriously*). Perhaps, sir, I'd better be frank with you——

MR. BULLIVANT (*warming hands at fire*). No, thank you. No, thank you. (DAWSON enters R.) I always distrust people who tell me they're going to be frank with me, and—— (*Suddenly sees DAWSON.*) What the devil are you doing here? (*Crosses to C.*)

DAWSON. You sent for me, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. No, I didn't. . . . Go away! Go away!!

DAWSON. I beg pardon, sir. I thought——

MR. BULLIVANT (*crossing to R.C.*). Well, you shouldn't think. Go away. Go away.

(DAWSON goes to door R.)

ERNEST (*touching his arm*). Chimney, sir.

(DAWSON comes back and stands below R. end of sofa.)

MR. BULLIVANT. Eh?

ERNEST (L.C.). Chimney.

MR. BULLIVANT (*remembering*). Oh yes, of course. I sent for you. (*To DAWSON.*) Of course I sent for you. My chimney—chimney in my room is smoking——

DAWSON (R.). Really, sir. The chimneys were all——

MR. BULLIVANT (R.C.). You're about to tell me the chimney has just been swept?

(DAWSON is silent.)

Weren't you? Come—be honest. Weren't you?

DAWSON. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Why will you purposely deceive me about this chimney? My study is unbearable—can't sit in it—can't come downstairs—house full of people—obliged to go to bed. Monstrous! See to it.

DAWSON. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, go along. Don't stand staring there.

DAWSON. Yes, sir. (*Going.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Wait a minute. Don't mention that I am downstairs.

DAWSON. No, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, get along—get along! What the devil are you standing there for?

(*DAWSON goes R. and off in rather a frightened manner.*)

(*To ERNEST.*) Now, then—what have you done? (*Going up R. behind table.*)

ERNEST. The firm has sent me home. (C.)

MR. BULLIVANT. I knew it! Well—a firm doesn't send a young man from Africa to England unless he's done something remarkable—what is it? Money? (*Dropping down L. from behind table.*)

ERNEST. Something to do with money—yes.

MR. BULLIVANT. Just as I thought. Well, how much is it, and what do you want? It can't be anything fraudulent, because, although you are a scoundrel, you are not a dishonourable scoundrel. What have you done?

ERNEST. It isn't what I have done. It's what the firm have done.

MR. BULLIVANT. They've discharged you? (*Sits in arm-chair.*)

ERNEST. No; they've raised my salary.

(*MR. BULLIVANT looks at him a moment, then laughs heartily.*)

I'm not joking. (L.C.)

MR. BULLIVANT. No, but they must be.

ERNEST. They're not. They've raised my salary.

MR. BULLIVANT. What for? I always looked upon you as the fool of the firm.

ERNEST. I think that's why they've raised my salary.

MR. BULLIVANT. Will you be good enough to tell me why you are here, in the middle of the night, without any warning, and why you wanted to see me privately?

(*ERNEST goes R. and quietly opens and closes the door, looks at window.*)

MR. BULLIVANT watches him attentively.)

Where are you going? Don't go while I'm talking to you. Don't go, I say, you're very mysterious, ain't you?

ERNEST (*takes chair L. of table and moving it a little sits L.C.*). Just as well to be careful. The firm has sent me home on a little matter of business. When that is done, they raise my salary and give me a month's holiday.

MR. BULLIVANT (*after a pause*). What business?

ERNEST (*carelessly*). Ever heard of the Lawson diamond?

MR. BULLIVANT. Lawson diamond! Of course I have. Huge stone discovered by you some time back.

ERNEST. Discovered in our mine.

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, I mean in your mine. I didn't suppose for a moment you discovered it. Not likely!

ERNEST. What do you know about it?

MR. BULLIVANT. As much as anyone else, I suppose. Long article in "The Times" some months back—describing its discovery—its immense value—ninety thousand pounds, wasn't it?—something utterly ridiculous like that—and how it was on its way to England under an escort.

ERNEST. Yes; that's what we wanted them to think. When a diamond of much value is being taken from one place to another it is usually supposed to be under strong escort.

MR. BULLIVANT. Thank you very much. How very kind of you. Teach your grandmother! Do you take me for a damn fool, or what?

ERNEST. As a matter of fact, however, there are in these sort of cases *two* diamonds—the original and a clever imitation. It is the imitation which travels with the escort.

MR. BULLIVANT. God bless my soul! Then what becomes of the original?

ERNEST. Well, the firm sends for one of its clerks—possibly the fool of the firm. To him they hand the original. He puts it in his pocket and receives his instructions. He is to proceed in a leisurely fashion by some ordinary steamer as an ordinary passenger to London. Arrived there, he goes to the office—hands the original to a certain person—gets the receipt, and, in this case, a rise of salary, and a month's holiday!

MR. BULLIVANT. Then you—

ERNEST. Yes, fool of the firm!

MR. BULLIVANT (*in surprise*). And the Lawson diamond—?

(ERNEST *smiling—pats the pocket of his waistcoat.*)

My dear fellow, I'm delighted! I'm simply delighted. (*Shaking ERNEST heartily by both hands.*) You must be a very clever fellow for them to trust you like this. By George, you must be very clever indeed! And yet, you don't look it, do you?

ERNEST. Ah, I've been one too many for you, sir! The fool of the firm has deceived the brilliant old criminal lawyer. By Jove! I ought to have a year's holiday instead of a month.

(MR. BULLIVANT *laughs.*)

Can I have something to eat?

MR. BULLIVANT (*rises*). Can you have something to eat? (*Goes down L., and rings electric bell below fire-place.*) A fellow with ninety

thousand pounds in his pocket asking for something to eat! You can have every mortal thing in the house as far as I'm concerned. But I can't understand why you didn't take the diamond straight to London. (*Below fire-place.*)

ERNEST. The Chief wired me to Southampton appointing to-morrow morning, and I preferred to come here to knocking about in some London hotel.

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, of course, of course. That would have been most dangerous. (*Crossing to c.*)

ERNEST. Besides——

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes?

ERNEST. How's Virginia?

(MR. BULLIVANT chuckles to himself, crosses R.)

What's the matter?

MR. BULLIVANT (*again laughing*). Oh, nothing, nothing—(*Laughs*)—you'd better ask her yourself. She'll be here as soon as she knows you're on the premises. Haven't you dined? (*Turning to ERNEST and coming above table.*)

ERNEST. No; I thought I'd come straight here.

MR. BULLIVANT. Quite right. Very sensible. Very sensible of you! I say, Ernest—not a word to anyone else.

ERNEST (*seriously*). You are the only person, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah, that's right. Ninety thousand pounds eh? (*Above table.*) Wonderful!

ERNEST. Yes.

MR. BULLIVANT. Wonderful! Wonderful!! And in your pocket too, eh!—wonderful!

ERNEST. Well, you see, sir, it isn't only the diamond—it's what the diamond means.

MR. BULLIVANT. Eh?

ERNEST. And the diamond means—Virginia.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah!

ERNEST. The better I stand with the firm—the nearer I am to Virginia. (*Rises and puts chair back below table.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*behind table*). I can't tell you how glad I am to hear you say that.

ERNEST. She's never really out of my thoughts, you know. In my rooms abroad I've a perfect gallery of her photographs. Do you object to my smoking? (*Going to fire and knocking pipe out on R. boot.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. No, it's a most objectionable habit, but still, I suppose—— What are you doing making that mess all over the hearthrug? (*Goes to fire and picks up brush—sweeps tobacco-ash up in fire-place.*)

ERNEST. You take snuff—— (*Moving to c. Going to table and opening packet of tobacco.*) That's worse——

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, very occasionally I do take snuff, but that, too, is an objectionable habit. What are you doing? (*Moving to table, c., and clearing up tobacco.*)

ERNEST (*goes to small table R.C.*). Shocking!

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, yes, but it's not so bad as smoking—

(*ERNEST squirts syphon on floor.*)

(*Up L. of table.*) What are you doing? God bless my soul! You really are the most careless fellow I ever met in all my life! (*Moving down L.*)

ERNEST (*innocently—astonished*). What, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT (*works round L. to above table. Very excitedly—c.*). You don't know it—you don't know it, of course! I don't say you do it on purpose—but you really are appallingly untidy.

ERNEST. My dear sir!

MR. BULLIVANT. It's all right—it's all right—please don't think I'm complaining. I'm not complaining. I merely mention it—I merely mention it.

ERNEST. I'd no idea—

MR. BULLIVANT (*hysterically*). I knew you'd no idea; that's the terrible part of it.

ERNEST. But what have I done?

MR. BULLIVANT. What have you done? What have you done? (*Moving below table.*) Tobacco ash—all over the place—I sweep it up—I say nothing. No sooner have I done that—look here—all over the table—meanwhile you flood the place with soda-water. You've no idea what you're like. (*Going up L. and finishing c., above table.*) I never saw such a man! You really should break yourself of these habits.

(*By this time he is face to face with ERNEST above table. During the old man's outburst ERNEST has apparently been blankly astonished—now a broad genial smile comes over his face and at last he laughs heartily.*)

I'm not laughing. (*Almost hysterically.*)

ERNEST. Yes, you are.

MR. BULLIVANT. No, I'm not.

(*He is turning indignantly away when ERNEST stops him, places his hands firmly on the old man's shoulders and turns him slowly round till they are once more face to face.*)

ERNEST (*R.C., still smiling*). Yes, you are, you dear old man—can't you see I have been pulling your leg?

MR. BULLIVANT (*c., severely*). I won't have my leg pulled.

ERNEST. Susan told me if a thing was out of place in this room you exploded.

MR. BULLIVANT. How dare she? How dare she?



ERNEST



ERNEST (*going steadily on*). I had to see you explode—just to remind me of old times.

(*For a moment they look at each other seriously, then ERNEST begins to smile slowly. MR. BULLIVANT smiles, and gradually they both break into hearty laughter.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Remind you of old times, eh? Old times, when you were a little boy, a little curly-headed beast of a boy. (*Turns away—through his laughter.*) You were!

(ERNEST *nods—laughing.*)

Watching me clear it up, eh?

(ERNEST *nods*; *then they both laugh again.*)

Ha, ha!—I'm bound to admit it's rather amusing—you scoundrel! You scoundrel! You young—— (*Slaps ERNEST on L. side of face.*)

(MERRIDEW *enters R.*)

What the devil do you want? (*Moving to MERRIDEW.*)

MERRIDEW. You rang, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. No, I didn't. Go away, go away.

(MERRIDEW *is going.*)

Oh yes, I did ring. Mr. Ernest would like some supper.

MERRIDEW. Yes, sir. (*Going.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Wait a minute. Do you think I can get to the dining-room without being seen?

MERRIDEW. I think so, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, don't stand staring there. Go along with you.

(MERRIDEW *exits.*)

ERNEST (*who is on L. of MR. BULLIVANT*). By the way, you've some one staying here?

MR. BULLIVANT. No, no! Only—Mr. Jarvis.

ERNEST. Who is he?

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, I don't know. Virginia met him at some house in town—then I met him a little later at a public dinner. We both of us liked him, and—er—we asked him down. (*Now at door R.*)

ERNEST. Dinner-party on this evening?

MR. BULLIVANT. No, only Mr. Jarvis and Dr. Maclaren and his wife—horrid over-dressed little beast—I hate her, and Virginia.

ERNEST. Why don't you join them?

MR. BULLIVANT (*turning to ERNEST, who is R.C.*). Oh, my dear boy! I am much too old. Besides, my health won't permit.

ERNEST. Why, rubbish, sir! You're the youngest of us all.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh no, no, no! Don't be foolish. Besides, I can't stand it—chatter, chatter, all about nothing at all! Virginia likes it, and she allows me to hide upstairs, where I am perfectly happy. Oh no, my dear boy, I have talked conventional rubbish to uninteresting visitors for more than half a century. Now I am taking a holiday.

(Voices are heard.)

(In much agitation, going up stage behind couch.) Oh, voices! Can't you stop them—I——

(The voices grow louder. In particular MRS. MACLAREN is heard off R. ERNEST moves to L.C.)

MRS. MACLAREN *(off)*. But I must see him. This room, isn't it?

MR. BULLIVANT. It's Mrs. Maclaren. I'm off! I'm off! I'm off!

(MR. BULLIVANT moves towards his bedroom. The door opens and MRS. MACLAREN enters.)

MRS. MACLAREN. Aha! Here you are; we never see you. It's my belief you hide. *(Getting to R.C.)*

MR. BULLIVANT *(coming slightly down to her on R. side of table and shaking hands—C.)*. No, I just crept downstairs on purpose to catch a glimpse of you.

MRS. MACLAREN *(pleased)*. I don't believe you did.

MR. BULLIVANT. I did, really.

MRS. MACLAREN. How are you?

MR. BULLIVANT *(a little irritably)*. I'm not at all well. This weather, you know, is trying. Oh, you know my nephew, don't you?

(Enter JARVIS R.)

MRS. MACLAREN. Oh yes, of course, how do you do? *(Crossing to ERNEST.)*

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah, and here's Mr. Jarvis. Mr. Jarvis, may I introduce my nephew—Mr. Ernest Heron—fresh from Africa—very fresh from Africa! *(Tries to escape by door L.)*

(ERNEST crosses to JARVIS below R. end of settee and shakes hands.)

MRS. MACLAREN. Oh, Mr. Bullivant, I just wanted to say—— *(Moves up round and above table.)*

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah, yes, you must be going—— *(Coming down L. of table.)*

(JARVIS and ERNEST go up.)

MRS. MACLAREN. I could stop and talk to you for hours. *(Coming down R. of table.)*

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, my lord—I mean—yes, but I shouldn't do it; you've a long drive home, haven't you?

MRS. MACLAREN. Interesting man, Mr. Jarvis. (*Crossing with MR. BULLIVANT.*)

(MR. BULLIVANT *is below her to couch.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, ain't he? Very! (*Stopping below settee.*)

MRS. MACLAREN. Seemed to quite understand all my ideas.

MR. BULLIVANT. Does he—fancy! God bless my soul.

MRS. MACLAREN. Good night.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh no, I'll see you to the door.

(*She opens door.*)

Can't think why you want to go—but I'm glad you're going—I mean——

(MR. BULLIVANT *goes off with MRS. MACLAREN R., and closes door.*)

ERNEST. Funny old chap—she always did get on his nerves.

JARVIS (*to ERNEST*). Just back from Africa, I hear?

(*Both come down C.—JARVIS R., and ERNEST L.*)

ERNEST. Yes.

JARVIS. Staying here long? (*Below table, C.*)

ERNEST. I am due in London to-morrow morning.

JARVIS. Oh, I'm off to-morrow, too. My man's taking my traps up to-night. Colonel Wilcox is motoring us up in the morning. Miss Bullivant is going, too.

ERNEST. Virginia! Going to London?

JARVIS. Yes, her aunt is ill, I believe.

ERNEST. Oh! I'm sorry to hear the old lady is ill.

JARVIS. Why not come in the car with us?

ERNEST. No, I must leave quite early.

(*As ERNEST turns away JARVIS looks at him. He goes up C., and moves to behind sofa and takes book off book-case. VIRGINIA comes in with a rush R., followed by MR. BULLIVANT. She goes to ERNEST and greets him with much enthusiasm. She holds out her hands and ERNEST takes them.*)

VIRGINIA. Ernest, Ernest, where are you. I am glad to see you—you dear old thing—but what has brought you back? How long are you staying? You are looking well. When did you land? Why didn't you let us know?

(*Through this fire of questions ERNEST, holding VIRGINIA's hands, tries to break in and answer her, but she talks so fast that he does not get a chance.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*remonstrating*). My dear child, how can the poor boy answer all these questions. (R.)

VIRGINIA. Ernest will answer any questions I ask him.

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, you see. *(The old man laughs.)*

VIRGINIA. You wait. What has brought you back, Ernest?

ERNEST *(hesitating—smiling)*. Er—ahem—er—I—

VIRGINIA. What has brought you back, Ernest?

ERNEST. Well, dear, I can't quite tell you.

MR. BULLIVANT. There you are, there you are. *(Laughs.)* Come to grief at the first fence. *(R.)*

VIRGINIA *(to MR. BULLIVANT)*. You be quiet.

(MR. BULLIVANT laughs. VIRGINIA takes ERNEST'S right arm affectionately and moves L. and up to window.)

Come and tell me all about yourself.

(They go up to window and exeunt through it. JARVIS—who has been looking at book up R.—now goes towards the window, and is going to follow, when MR. BULLIVANT whistles and stops him.)

MR. BULLIVANT *(at fire. JARVIS drops down to MR. BULLIVANT)*. Two's company, don't you think? *(Laughs.)* Pet idea of mine—that—eh?

JARVIS *(cautiously)*. Yes—yes.

MR. BULLIVANT *(by fire-place)*. Ah, I'm so glad—you agree with me.

(ERNEST and VIRGINIA laugh outside window.)

Don't they sound happy out there, eh? *(Looking at them over R. shoulder.)*

JARVIS. Yes, they do indeed.

MR. BULLIVANT. A great grief to me, Mr. Jarvis, if anything were to interfere with my little plan.

JARVIS. Oh, I can quite understand that.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ernest's a bit of a slow coach, you know. Why, God bless my soul, in the old days they'd have been half-way to Gretna Green by this time.

(MERRIDEW enters R.)

MERRIDEW. Mr. Ernest's supper is ready, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ernest—supper! Tell him it's ready, Mr. Jarvis. Give him a good shout. *(To MERRIDEW)*. Take the whisky and soda into the dining-room.

(Goes below sofa and takes tray with syphon, etc., from table R.C., and exits R.)

JARVIS. Mr. Heron! Mr. Heron, your supper's ready! *(Up L. of window.)*

ERNEST *(coming through window and going R.)*. Oh—good!

VIRGINIA *(coming after him)*. Shall I come with you?

MR. BULLIVANT. No, he wouldn't eat anything if you were chattering there.

ERNEST. No—I won't be five minutes.

(ERNEST goes off door down R., taking his hat and coat on arm
MR. BULLIVANT sits in arm-chair.)

JARVIS. I have been trying to persuade him to motor up with us to-morrow. (Is on L. of VIRGINIA.)

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh yes. Is he doing so?

JARVIS. Well, he thinks he must go earlier.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah yes, of course. He has some rather important business. (JARVIS is up c.)

VIRGINIA. Yes—what is the business? (Crosses to MR. BULLIVANT.)

MR. BULLIVANT. Wouldn't you like to know?

(MR. BULLIVANT sings "The Spider and the Fly" until VIRGINIA says, "It's very mysterious.")

VIRGINIA. Hush! How many times have I told you you must not sing! What is the business—it's very mysterious.

MR. BULLIVANT. Mysterious? Don't be silly, there's nothing whatever mysterious about it. (Irritably.)

VIRGINIA (laughing at MR. BULLIVANT). Cross-patch. (Kneeling by him on R. of easy chair and putting her hands on arm of chair.)

MR. BULLIVANT. I'm not cross. (Turns away irritably.)

VIRGINIA (gently pulls him round till he faces her). Cross-patch!

MR. BULLIVANT. I'm not. (Smiles.)

VIRGINIA. Ah, that's right. So Mrs. Maclaren caught you?

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, very unfortunate. Nasty over-dressed little beast—I hate her!

(JARVIS comes down c. a little, and looks at them.)

VIRGINIA. You're half asleep, you know. (She kneels, takes out his watch and proceeds to wind it. MR. BULLIVANT watches her fondly—presently he catches JARVIS looking at them, and he laughs.)

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, I am rather tired. Ah, Mr. Jarvis, you must think us a strange couple.

JARVIS. Oh, I think it's all very delightful. (By table c.)

MR. BULLIVANT. Many years ago, when this fine young lady was a little girl—she had a great sorrow—her dear mother died—(Patting her on the head—slight pause)—and that evening, in order to stop her tears, she was permitted, as a special favour, to wind up my watch, and she's been winding it up ever since. Haven't you, my darling?

VIRGINIA (*putting the watch back*). And very nicely I do it, don't I?

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, very, my sweet—very. Do you know, Mr. Jarvis—in all those years I don't think she's broken the main-spring more than about thirty-seven times. Ah, I caught you that time, Mr. Jarvis.

JARVIS. You did, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. I caught him then. I must try that on the curate.

VIRGINIA (*rising up—severely*). It's time you were in bed.

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, I am rather tired. Oh dear, I do hope if I drop off to sleep in this chair I shan't make that noise you call "kittens." I call it bronchial asthma, Mr. Jarvis, but she calls it "kittens." Oh dear, how nice it is to have our dear old Ernest with us again. (*Laughing—in a drowsy voice.*) I can't think—why you two—don't make up your minds. (*Eyes closed.*)

(VIRGINIA is now above chair and puts her hand on his shoulder.)

VIRGINIA (*reprovingly*). Mind—not minds—my mind.

MR. BULLIVANT (*half asleep*). Well, why don't you make up your mind. (*He falls asleep and wheezes three times.*)

(VIRGINIA gives the old man a look to see if he is asleep and then she joins JARVIS C.)

JARVIS (*softly*). Why don't you?

VIRGINIA. What! Ernest?

JARVIS. Yes.

(Pause.)

VIRGINIA. Well—er—for one thing—

JARVIS. You don't—er—care enough?

VIRGINIA (*pauses and looks around*). I like him awfully.

JARVIS. Poor Ernest!

VIRGINIA. To be liked awfully?

JARVIS. Yes.

VIRGINIA (*crosses to sofa and sits*). He doesn't seem to mind. (*Pauses a moment, then turns to him playfully.*) Tell me—if you were Ernest, what would you do?

JARVIS (*crosses R. He gives MR. BULLIVANT a look to see if he is still asleep*). Well—er—I should, first of all, give Mr. Liked-Awfully the sack. (*Following her behind sofa, and bending over on L. of her.*)

VIRGINIA (*amused*). Well?

JARVIS (*behind sofa*). And I should engage the services of—er—Mr. Somebody Else.

VIRGINIA (*after a moment*). Love?

JARVIS. Wouldn't you?

VIRGINIA. Like a shot.

(Pause.)

JARVIS (*dropping down R. of her*). Dull dog, Mr. Liked-Awfully.

VIRGINIA (*slowly*). And Mr.—?

JARVIS. Love? Oh, he's never dull.

(Pause. VIRGINIA rises and takes a step L.)

Ah! That makes you think, doesn't it?

VIRGINIA (*slowly, C.*). I was only wondering—supposing I sacked Mr. Liked-Awfully—what I should feel like if I discovered that, after all, he'd really been the right man. (*After a moment she turns to him.*) I shall miss you, you know.

JARVIS (R.C.). Then we shall miss each other.

VIRGINIA. You have only been here four days. Do you realize that?

JARVIS. Four delightful days.

VIRGINIA. And to-morrow—a few hurried miles in a motor full of dusty people—and those four days—will have been swallowed up in the smoke and grime—of London.

JARVIS (*bending to her*). Why should they be?

VIRGINIA (*cheerfully*). Because everything in this world comes to an end, and the nicer it is the sooner the end!

(RUDDOCK, MR. BULLIVANT's valet, enters door up L.)

Ah, here's Ruddock, come to take Grumpy to bed. Bedtime, Ruddock?

RUDDOCK. Very late, Miss.

(Goes to MR. BULLIVANT—takes out watch, compares it with clock on mantelpiece, taps MR. BULLIVANT on shoulder twice. MR. BULLIVANT does not wake. He then slaps him on the back of R. hand, which is on arm of chair. MR. BULLIVANT grunts each time he is slapped.)

JARVIS. Then our four delightful days have come to an end.

(VIRGINIA and JARVIS go up to window.)

MR. BULLIVANT (*slowly waking up*). Eh? Ah! Ruddock, that you? Come to take me to bed? What time is it?

RUDDOCK. Nearly twelve, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! I ought not to be up so late.

RUDDOCK. No, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Everybody else gone to bed?

RUDDOCK. No, sir, Mr. Jarvis and Miss Virginia are here.

MR. BULLIVANT. Eh? Oh—(*Very wearily*)—Ruddock, what was it I wanted to see you about? Something very important.

RUDDOCK (*persuasively*). In the morning, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. No, not in the morning—now! Something I wanted to tell you now! Help me on to my feet—

(RUDDOCK assists him to rise from chair.)

I may be able to think of it. Straighten me out. Shove me in the back.

(RUDDOCK does so, and then pats him on the shoulder.)

No, don't pat me. What the devil are you patting me for? Jinny! Where's my Jinny?

(MR. BULLIVANT and RUDDOCK go up, RUDDOCK on his L. side. RUDDOCK opens door L.)

My love, what was it I wanted to tell old Ruddock?

VIRGINIA. I don't know. Take you to bed, I should think.

MR. BULLIVANT (on L. of VIRGINIA, RUDDOCK on his L.). No, no, it was something very important—very— (Yawns.)

VIRGINIA. You're dead tired. Go to bed, darling.

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, I am rather tired. Good night, Mr. Jarvis.

JARVIS. Good night, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. I never like saying good night. One more day gone. I oughtn't to be up so late, ought I, Ruddock?

RUDDOCK. No, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh no. Early to bed—and early to rise—makes a man healthy—wealthy and—

(RUDDOCK gives arm.)

(Suddenly and joyfully.) Oh, Ruddock, I know, I know what I wanted to tell Ruddock. The chimney—chimney in my room is smoking.

RUDDOCK. Indeed, sir? It's been swept lately—

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, it must have been a bird—bird built a nest. I wish you'd speak about it. I cannot have birds building their beastly nests in my chimney.

(RUDDOCK is leading MR. BULLIVANT. By this time they are at the door.)

(Stops.) Wait! Where's Ernest?

RUDDOCK. Having supper, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What, still? What a fellow he is for eating.

(ERNEST enters R.)

Aha—here you are! Have you had enough to eat?

ERNEST (goes up C. to MR. BULLIVANT). Splendid, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. That's right. Good night to you. (Shaking hands.) So glad to have you with us again. Isn't the old place looking nice?

ERNEST. Lovely, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Did you see the rhododendrons, eh?

ERNEST. Rather! Aren't they ripping?

MR. BULLIVANT. No, you didn't; they're not in bloom. (*General laugh.*) Caught you that time. I must try that on the curate. (*Mysteriously.*) All right, eh? (*Tapping his waistcoat pocket.*)

ERNEST. Quite all right. Don't worry about that!

MR. BULLIVANT. No, no, no. Good night. Good night, Mr. Jarvis.

JARVIS. Good night, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. See you later, Jinny?

VIRGINIA (*blowing a kiss*). Yes, darling.

MR. BULLIVANT. The birds oughtn't to do it. The room was full of smoke—(*As they go through the door*)—you know—I could scarcely breathe.

(*Exeunt MR. BULLIVANT and RUDDOCK L.*)

(*ERNEST closes door and goes to fire-place.*)

JARVIS (*to VIRGINIA*). Good night.

VIRGINIA. Going to bed?

JARVIS. Yes. I have a few letters I must get through. (*Crossing to ERNEST L. shakes hands.*) Good night, Mr. Heron.

ERNEST. Good night.

JARVIS. I may not see you in the morning.

ERNEST. No; I shall be off early.

JARVIS. It's good-bye, then.

ERNEST. I suppose it is. I look forward to seeing more of you the next time we meet, Mr. Jarvis.

JARVIS (*crosses R.*). Thank you. Good-bye. (*At door.*) Good night, Miss Bullivant.

VIRGINIA. Good night.

(*Exit JARVIS R. VIRGINIA watches him; then turns and sees ERNEST watching her with a smile.*)

ERNEST. Another victim?

VIRGINIA. Don't be horrid, Ernest. (*Above R. end of table.*)

ERNEST. How serious is it, this time?

VIRGINIA. He's very interesting.

ERNEST. When are you going to settle down? (*Sits c.*)

VIRGINIA. Settle down?

ERNEST. And marry me!

VIRGINIA (*softly*). Do you want me to—so much? (*Front of table.*)

ERNEST. No.

VIRGINIA (*amazed*). Thank you.

ERNEST. Not while you're larking around.

VIRGINIA (*B. side of table*). Larking around!

ERNEST. With others.

VIRGINIA. You are horrid, Ernest. (*She leans on R. end of table.*) Girls are very unfairly handicapped. Men do as they like before they marry—girls have no chance of really knowing anything about men; then when rumpusses happen after they're married the experienced man is pitied and the fool of a girl gets the blame.

ERNEST. All that, my dear, is just an excuse for your little flirtations—I know you. (*Smiling at her.*)

VIRGINIA (*sits on table at back—facing ERNEST*). Oh no, it isn't. If the old saying is true that a reformed rake makes the best husband—and I'm not at all sure that it isn't—then why shouldn't a reformed flirt make the best wife. (*She is fiddling with pencil, which she puts through ERNEST's hair.*) I am handicapped—Grumpy is the only man I know—I really know—but he's so fond of me, bless him—I can do that with him. (*Indicates twisting round her little finger.*) But there isn't a young man in the world like Grumpy.

ERNEST. What about me? (*He takes her by the R. wrist. She tries to get away.*) Don't wriggle—you can't get away. I'm rough on you sometimes, I admit—

VIRGINIA. You are. (*Takes hand away, examines wrist and rubs it.*)

ERNEST. Part o' my game.

VIRGINIA. Your game? (*Rising and coming down c.*)

ERNEST. Let you go your own sweet way. One of these days you'll get into a scrape, then you'll come howling to me.

VIRGINIA (*laughing*). Oh no, I shan't.

ERNEST. Yes, you will. I know you. (*Laughing.*)

VIRGINIA. You do say the most horrible things, Ernest!

ERNEST. Yes, I know.

VIRGINIA. Why do you?

ERNEST. My game.

VIRGINIA. What do you mean? Your game— (*A step to him.*)

ERNEST. Most fellows say all the pretty things before marriage and kick up the devil after. Now, I kick up the devil first—and get that done with—

VIRGINIA. But, supposing—mind, I only say supposing—the girl didn't do anything to kick up the devil about?

ERNEST. Then she wouldn't be in my line.

VIRGINIA (*laughs*). Then there's some hope for me?

ERNEST. There's every hope for you. (*Smiling.*)

VIRGINIA. And when you'd done kicking up the devil?

ERNEST (*rises and goes to her*). We should get married.

VIRGINIA. And then—you'd say the pretty things?

ERNEST. Yes—then I should say the pretty things.

VIRGINIA (*softly*). I believe you would.

ERNEST. One of these days you'll know it.

VIRGINIA (*laughing and turning to him*). Oh! You mean to marry me?

ERNEST. 'Course I do.

VIRGINIA (*pauses*). Good night, Ernest. (*Moves R.*)

ERNEST. Good night.

(VIRGINIA goes to door; she is just going out when ERNEST calls her back.)

Oh, Jinny!

VIRGINIA. Yes.

ERNEST. You're going to see Aunt Sophie to-morrow, aren't you?

VIRGINIA. Yes, poor dear. (*Laughing*.) She's so ill again.

ERNEST. She wouldn't be happy if she couldn't be ill occasionally.

VIRGINIA (*copying his tone in the earlier part of the scene*). Part of her game.

ERNEST. Her game?

VIRGINIA. To get me.

ERNEST (*laughing*). Well, she's got us both this time.

VIRGINIA. Both?

ERNEST. I wired to the old lady when we were nearing Southampton, saying I'd come and dine with her to-morrow evening—

VIRGINIA. She's very fond of you, Ernest.

ERNEST. Yes. She always was a bit eccentric, wasn't she? Give her my love, and tell her I shall be sure to turn up.

VIRGINIA. Yes, you'd better. If she knows you are in England and you don't turn up then we should have her *really* ill. (*Opening door*.)

ERNEST. I expect, when we're married, she'll—

VIRGINIA. Oh, she'll be very, very old then, won't she? Good night, Ernest. (*Exits R.*)

ERNEST (*smiling*). Fascinating little wretch!

(Goes to cabinet and takes up magazine, and sees SUSAN as she enters R. KEBLE is seen outside the window.)

Tell them to call me at seven, will you? (*Goes and sits in arm-chair L.*)

SUSAN. Yes, sir.

(SUSAN goes to window to draw the curtains—sees KEBLE—glances at ERNEST, and finding that ERNEST is not looking—waves to KEBLE to go away—then draws the curtains.)

You'd see better with the lamp, sir—

ERNEST. Eh? Oh, thank you.

(SUSAN goes to table lamp and tries to switch it on.)

SUSAN. Oh, it's not on, sir—just a minute. (*Goes to switches R.*)

ERNEST. You can turn the other lights out, Susan.

SUSAN. Very good, sir. (*Switches off the other lights.*) Nothing more you require, sir?

ERNEST. No, thank you.

SUSAN. Thank you, sir—good night, sir. (*Goes off R.*)

(*A clock in the room strikes twelve—then in a distant part of the house another clock strikes twelve in a deep tone.*)

(*MR. BULLIVANT mysteriously enters L. in dressing-gown, with a candle.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Ernest.

ERNEST. Hallo, sir. What on earth— (*Rising.*,

MR. BULLIVANT. Hush, Ernest—I'm exceedingly anxious—

ERNEST. What about, sir?

(*MR. BULLIVANT closes door carefully.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. About that diamond.

ERNEST. Oh! (*Laughing.*) Don't worry about that, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT (*irritably*). But I *do* worry—don't be foolish, Ernest. I've an idea—I can't imagine why I didn't think of it before. (*He goes to the safe.*) Now, my boy, give me the diamond.

ERNEST. Eh—what for, sir? (*Crosses to R. of lamp.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. We'll lock it securely in the safe.

ERNEST (*gravely shaking his head*). No, thank you, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Now, my dear boy, permit me to be the best judge of this. In this safe the diamond is secure—in your pocket—

ERNEST. And supposing there should be, by any chance, somebody after this stone, where do you imagine they'd look for it?

MR. BULLIVANT. In your pocket.

ERNEST. In my waistcoat pocket—or in your safe?

MR. BULLIVANT. In your pocket.

ERNEST. No, sir. The diamond has been in my waistcoat pocket since it was placed in my care, and it remains in my waistcoat pocket until I reach the office to-morrow morning.

MR. BULLIVANT. All right. You're an obstinate fellow, Ernest! Very obstinate indeed. (*Going.*) I don't believe you've got the damn thing at all.

(*ERNEST laughs.*)

Well, come on, let's have a look at it. I've never seen one of 'em in the rough state.

(*ERNEST shows him the diamond.*)

Is that it? Oh, what a disappointment. I don't think much of that. Oh, my boy, you've been done in the eye. Looks like a lump of soda—I've seen lots like this on Brighton beach.

ERNEST. Well, there's the diamond, sir; now you go to bed and don't you worry.

MR. BULLIVANT. No, I shan't now. Oh no. (*Going.*) I suppose, after all, there isn't much risk in my house, eh? But I got anxious, you know. Ah well, good night!

ERNEST. You'd better go up quietly or Ruddock will catch you.

MR. BULLIVANT (*a little anxious*). Eh? Oh, don't say that—he'd give me a devil of a talking to—oh no. (*Then chuckling and speaking in a whisper.*) He's gone to bed—everybody's gone to bed. Will you have some whisky or brandy? (*At door.*)

ERNEST. No, thank you, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah, that's right, I'm glad to hear you say that. Never touch alcohol myself, never have, never shall. Oh, my lord, these stairs— (*Opens door.*)

ERNEST. Shall I—

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh no, that's all right, see you in the morning; breakfast at eight, needn't come down to prayers unless you want to. Good night, Ernest! (*Goes off L.*)

(ERNEST goes to fire-place, throws cigar away, then, after a glance at the door and the window, he carefully takes a small leather parcel from his waistcoat pocket, opens it, and takes out a very large diamond. For a moment he looks at it—sits, his body turned towards up C., by the lamp—the room being only lighted by the one lamp—gives a cough, which is the cue for KEBLE to look through window. The moonlight is suggested through the casement curtains. As ERNEST is looking at the diamond a shadow comes on the curtains—he notices this, and carefully replaces the diamond in his waistcoat pocket. For a moment he sits absolutely still; then he crosses to door, R., quickly, switches on all the lights—and quickly goes to the window and draws the curtains—opens the window and looks out, but finds no one. He comes in again, shuts window and draws curtains; as he is drawing second curtain the door, R., now slowly opens, and an arm appears, the hand feels for the electric switch and turns one off—ERNEST turns at this and sees the arm.)

ERNEST (*addressing the arm*). Who's there?

(Quickly the hand turns off the remaining lights, and the stage is dark. Nothing is seen except perhaps two very indistinct forms. There are one or two muffled exclamations, a stifled cry—furniture upset—a crash of fire-irons—a thud—a groan from ERNEST and then silence.)

(*The CURTAIN falls.*)

For PICTURE: Red Lime on ERNEST's face by fire-place as he lays stretched on the floor.

This ACT plays 32 minutes.

ACT II

SCENE.—*The same room as at the end of ACT I. In great disorder.*

RUDDOCK *is up c., and MERRIDEW is standing holding R. door open.*

RUDDOCK. No, no. No one to be admitted without Mr. Bullivant's permission. Doctor Maclaren there?

MERRIDEW. Yes, Mr. Ruddock.

RUDDOCK. Mr. Bullivant will see him first.

MERRIDEW. Right, I'll tell him. (*Exits R.*)

(RUDDOCK *goes to door, L., and meets MR. BULLIVANT.*)

(MR. BULLIVANT *enters, assisted by VIRGINIA, and goes R.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Why didn't you come before? Expect me to come downstairs with only Miss Virginia to help me?

RUDDOCK. Sorry, sir, been very busy all night, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT (R.). Busy be hanged! Well, what have you done? Did you send for the police?

(VIRGINIA *looks out of window.*)

RUDDOCK (L.C.). No, I'm sorry to say I didn't, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Sorry! I'm very glad you didn't. That's the only sensible thing you've done for the last three months.

RUDDOCK. Everything is left just as we found it—nothing has been touched.

MR. BULLIVANT. Now mind, nobody to know anything about this business until I give permission, you darling.

RUDDOCK. Very good, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT (*who has crossed to fire-place*). Don't be a fool, Ruddock, I'm not calling you darling. Here, did you say? (*Pointing to fire-place.*)

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir—just there. (*Who is on R. of him, just between the two tables.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*after a moment*). What was the position exactly?

RUDDOCK. His head was against the fender. (*Goes down L.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Happened at midnight, and I'm not informed until this morning. Tsch! Tsch! That's all I can say now—tsch! An old servant like—why, you were here in Aunt Matilda's time. (*Goes to table and sits c.*)

VIRGINIA. Grumpy! (*Has moved to R. of chair above table.*)

(*No reply.*)

Grumpy?

MR. BULLIVANT. What is it? What is it, my love?

VIRGINIA (*slowly*). You don't think Ernest is in any—danger, do you?

MR. BULLIVANT. Of course he's in danger—very grave danger—

(*VIRGINIA turns away and sobs softly.*)

Eh? Tears—again? This is the second time I've seen tears this morning, and not yet eight o'clock. Not like my Virginia!

VIRGINIA. I'm sorry—I am so anxious. (*Fetches a cushion from settee R., and comes back with it below settee—is placing it behind the old man.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. I don't want a cushion.

VIRGINIA. Of course you do! You'll be much more comfortable.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh no, I shall not be more comfortable.

VIRGINIA. Yes, you will.

MR. BULLIVANT. No, I shall not be more comfortable.

VIRGINIA. You will be much more comfortable.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh well, perhaps I shall be—perhaps I shall be—

(*MERRIDEW enters with some coffee and a baked apple on a plate—he places these on the table C.*)

Here you are. Late as usual. (*Bus.: With tray—placing it R. end of table.*)

VIRGINIA. Let's see—you've got your coffee and your apple. Now, what else can I do? (*Crosses to L. of MR. BULLIVANT.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Nothing else, thank you—nothing else! Run away, my love. I've something serious to attend to. I don't like the look of the apple at all, Ruddock. And I was allowed to sleep on! The moment the discovery was made, I should have been informed.

VIRGINIA. Cushion all right? (*On L. of MR. BULLIVANT.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Quite all right. Now, my dear, you'd better prepare for your journey to London.

VIRGINIA. Oh, I don't think I can go now.

MR. BULLIVANT. Of course you'll go. Not nice to be here. The house in its present condition—besides, I wish you to go.

VIRGINIA. I don't want to leave Ernest.

MR. BULLIVANT. My darling child, Dr. Maclaren won't allow you or anyone else to see Ernest. Besides, there's your aunt—Ernest promised to dine with her to-day at her house in Chesham Place, and if you don't go, and if no one turns up to explain, I shudder

to think of the consequences. She, poor dear, ill with neuritis since Easter—besides, I'm quite sure Ernest would wish you to go.

VIRGINIA (*looks at him a moment seriously, then says to RUDDOCK, without taking her eyes off the old man*). Do you think I ought to go, Ruddock?

MR. BULLIVANT (*irritably*). What the devil's it got to do with Ruddock? There, run away—run away! (*Then suddenly nice again.*) Be sure you wrap up well, and be sure you come in to say good-bye. (*Bus.: Kisses both her hands.*)

VIRGINIA. Of course I shall! Quite comfortable?

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, quite.

VIRGINIA. Cushion all right?

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, quite—quite—quite.

(VIRGINIA *hesitates a moment, then goes up, stops at door, then comes quickly back and throws her arms around GRUMPY's neck and kisses him.*)

What is it now? (*As she kisses him.*) My little darling, you came back to say good-bye. You didn't think I was angry about the cushion?

VIRGINIA. No. (*She shakes her head.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. You understand me, don't you?

VIRGINIA (*at door*). Course I do. (*Exits.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*to RUDDOCK*). Course you do. She understands me, Ruddock. Doesn't she?

RUDDOCK. Course she does, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What did you say?

RUDDOCK. Course she does, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT (*imitating him*). Course she does. Course she does. Ruddock, hand me that box. (*Fidgets in his chair with the cushion.*)

(RUDDOCK *hands him a small box, which he carefully places in front of him on the table.*)

Just take that cushion away and—

(RUDDOCK *removes cushion.*)

—hide it somewhere, in case the dear child comes back. (*Points to underneath sofa.*)

(RUDDOCK *places cushion out of the way under settee.*)

(*Dropping spoon.*) Oh dear, oh dear, this spoon is all over apple. Well, don't stand staring there. Haven't you got a napkin or something?

(RUDDOCK *dries it on handkerchief.*)

(*Tries to stop him.*) No, not on your dirty pocket-handkerchief.

(RUDDOCK *wipes spoon.*)

RUDDOCK. It's quite clean, sir. (*Holding pocket-handkerchief.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, it don't look clean—nasty, dirty, grubby-looking thing. Oh, I see, it's a coloured one. Now I want to see Dr.—Dr.— What the devil do you want to put pips in the apple for. (*Bus.: Supposed to have a pip in his mouth which he removes.*) I want to speak to Dr. Thingamygum, Dr.—

RUDDOCK. Maclaren you mean, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes—Dr. Maclaren!

(RUDDOCK goes to door R., and calls DR. MACLAREN; as he turns back MR. BULLIVANT says.)

This coffee is much too hot. What an amazing thing it is, I can never get a decent cup of coffee in my own house. I never met such a lot of diddering—— (*DR. MACLAREN enters R., and comes to below settee. Sees DR. MACLAREN—manner changes.*) Ah, Doctor, I wanted to see you, a little point I want to make sure about—the wound on Mr. Heron's head—could it have been caused by a fall? The head striking——?

DR. MACLAREN. Most unlikely. He was attacked.

MR. BULLIVANT. From behind?

DR. MACLAREN. No—from the front—the bruise is here. (*Touches forehead with L. hand.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Bruise? It was a bruise? (*To RUDDOCK.*) Why the devil didn't you say it was a bruise?

DR. MACLAREN. Yes; he was stunned, you see. I incline to the opinion that some yielding weapon was used—such as a sandbag.

MR. BULLIVANT. Sandbag? That scarcely sounds like a burglar. How is the patient?

DR. MACLAREN. Well, now, he has a wonderful constitution—great hopes—great hopes. He——

MR. BULLIVANT. Still quite unconscious, I fear? (*Coughs.*)

DR. MACLAREN. Yes; but he may come round at any moment. When he does it's absolute quiet—nobody must see him.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah! Now, would you tell Miss Virginia that. (*Coughs.*)

DR. MACLAREN. She's going to London, isn't she?

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes.

DR. MACLAREN. Ah, that's good—good——

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, it is good. She's anxious. (*Coughs.*) Still got it, you see. Your medicine's no damn good. If you can tell her there's no danger—pray do so.

DR. MACLAREN. Yes, I will. Nothing more, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. At present—no.

DR. MACLAREN. Then I'll run upstairs again.

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, please.

DR. MACLAREN. It's a curious thing nothing appears to have been stolen. (*Goes to door R.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Get rid of him, Ruddock. He's inclined to talk.

DR. MACLAREN (*coming back*). I say, it's a curious thing that nothing appears to have been stolen.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh yes—*very*.

DR. MACLAREN. Yes, it's very curious.

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, I said it was curious. (*He signals RUDDOCK to get DR. MACLAREN away.*)

RUDDOCK. Nothing else you wish to ask the doctor, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. No—nothing, thank you.

DR. MACLAREN. Oh, very well. I'll get along upstairs. (*Is going, but stops at door.*) Oh, by the way—

MR. BULLIVANT (*muttering*). Oh, my lord, here he is back again.

DR. MACLAREN (*coming back*). If you could just spare me a few minutes I should like to tell you of a case I had—a dear old lady—a Mrs. Wagstaff.

RUDDOCK. Nothing more you wish to ask the doctor, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. Nothing more. I wish to ask the doctor nothing more.

DR. MACLAREN (*going*). Then I'll run upstairs. (*Pauses at door—bus.: and off.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. What a dreadful man! Got such a habit of going to the door and then coming back again. (*The old man is lost in thought—he takes the camelia from the box.*) This camelia, found in Mr. Heron's hand, puzzles me. Where did he get this camelia from? (*Wheezes.*) And why should he be holding it in his hand? (*Wheezes.*) Could he have been trying to prevent somebody getting it? (*Wheezes.*) Who would want it? Somebody jealous of his having it—but who—and because of whom.

(*He commences to eat again.*)

RUDDOCK. Might it have got there by accident, sir? (*On L of table and above.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*rises, down and round table to L.*). Don't ask ridiculous questions. How could it get there by accident? You might as well ask if it sprouted there. I wonder if he had it in his coat when he arrived—or could he have snatched it from somebody else's coat—the ruffian who evidently had a struggle with him here? (*By fire.*)

RUDDOCK (R.). Yes, sir, but would a burglar be wearing a camelia, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. I didn't say it was a burglar—but if it was he might have been wearing a camelia—(*Crosses up to back of table*)—or he might have been wearing a nasturtium—or he might have been wearing nothing at all. In falling, of course, he might easily have grasped at something, but what could he— (*At table—his eye falls*

on the camelia plant. He goes to it and counts the blossoms.) Ah! Here! Here! One, two, three, four—there were five blooms last night, Ruddock! And one of them freshly broken off!

RUDDOCK (*goes up R. of plant and looks at it*). Yes, sir; but if Mr. Ernest had clutched at it in falling wouldn't he have pulled it over?

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh no. The stand is quite firm. Ruddock, in all probability that flower came from here; in which case we are—where we were. Who saw Mr. Heron when he first arrived last night? (*Comes back to table and sits.*)

RUDDOCK. Miss Virginia's maid, sir—Susan.

MR. BULLIVANT. Master Ernest is rather fond of the fair sex—a buttonhole suggests the fair sex. Is it possible he has been in any scrape? Is it possible this was some form of revenge? I wonder if he had this flower when he arrived? Your suggestion that the camelia came from that plant may be all wrong, in which case—

RUDDOCK. Well, it's just possible, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Then why the devil did you suggest it? Send the maid Susan to me.

RUDDOCK. Susan. (*Goes up to door L., and calls off.*) Susan Medley!

(MR. BULLIVANT *abstractedly resumes his baked apple*. SUSAN *enters L. and comes nervously down L. of table.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Is she there?

RUDDOCK. She's here, sir. (*Coming down R. of table.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. I said is she there?

RUDDOCK. She's here, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What the devil do you mean by saying she's here when I ask if she's there! Such a silly thing to do—idiotic! You want to quarrel with me, don't you? Want to have a row? I've noticed once or twice— (*Turning and seeing SUSAN.*) Ah, there you are! Ah! Now will you be good enough to listen to me, and bring your mind, so far as is possible, on what I have to say.

SUSAN. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT (*to RUDDOCK*). Shut the window, please, and bring my shawl—there's a draught.

(RUDDOCK *does so.*)

I understand that you were the first to see Mr. Heron when he arrived last evening? (*To SUSAN.*)

SUSAN. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Very good. Did you have any conversation with him?

SUSAN. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Did he talk to you?

SUSAN. Well, sir—er— (*She is nervously fingering her apron.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Please don't fidget with your apron ; it worries me ; it upsets me. He talked to you ?

SUSAN. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT (*impatiently*). Well, what did he talk about ?

SUSAN. Er—well—at first, sir—

MR. BULLIVANT. He must have said something ! Well, well. Did he talk about the weather or what ?

SUSAN. He asked first of all who was here, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. There you are. Why didn't you say so before. Well, what then ? Did he ask you anything else ?

(*Pause. SUSAN, more nervous than ever, cannot reply.*)

Please, please—you're a very poor witness—she's a rotten witness, Ruddock. Did he ask you anything else ?

SUSAN (*very frightened*). Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, what was it ? What was it ?

SUSAN. He asked me to kiss him, sir.

(*RUDDOCK laughs suddenly. MR. BULLIVANT turns to see what RUDDOCK is doing.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. What the devil's the matter with you ; aren't you—well ? (*Bus.: Of looking at RUDDOCK and finding him laughing, then he turns and contemplates SUSAN.*) Oh, he asked you to kiss him ? And, did you comply with his request ?

SUSAN (*very nervous*). Did I—did I what, sir ?

MR. BULLIVANT (*exasperated*). Did you kiss him ?

SUSAN (*very frightened*). No, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, you didn't kiss him ! Well then, what happened ? I suppose he kissed you ?

SUSAN. No, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, he didn't kiss you. What did he do then ?

SUSAN (*very nervously*). He told me I was a very pretty girl, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. And what did you say to that ?

SUSAN. I said, "Oh, go on, Mr. Ernest !"

(*RUDDOCK laughs silently. MR. BULLIVANT turns and sees him—bangs table. RUDDOCK controls himself.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. "Go on" calling you a pretty girl ?

SUSAN. No, sir ; I meant him to stop.

MR. BULLIVANT. You meant him to what ?

SUSAN. I meant him to stop, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. You meant him to stop and you said "Go on !" He called you a pretty girl and wanted to kiss you ; he didn't, and you wouldn't, and it's all very extraordinary.

(*During this RUDDOCK has to turn away convulsed with suppressed laughter. MR. BULLIVANT again catches him. Same business as before.*)

SUSAN. I hope you won't forget, sir—Mr. Ernest has known me since I was a child.

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, I gathered that the acquaintance had been of some duration.

(SUSAN again fidgets with her apron.)

You've got a very bad habit of fidgeting with your apron. You fidget with your apron, fidget with your skirt, you'll fidget with your boots next I imagine. You should really endeavour to break yourself of those habits. Tell me—when Mr. Ernest arrived, was he wearing any kind of posy?

SUSAN. No, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Not a camelia? *(Looking at RUDDOCK and eating his apple.)*

SUSAN. No, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. You're sure of that?

SUSAN. Quite sure, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What makes you so sure of that?

SUSAN. Because he picked the flower after.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, he plucked the flower after! Ah—was it a camelia? *(Turning to SUSAN.)*

SUSAN. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah—um! *(Picking up camelia.)* You know this camelia was found clenched in Mr. Ernest's hand this morning. *(Puts camelia on L. end of table.)*

SUSAN *(with a glance at the camelia tree up L.C.)*. Yes, sir. *(Is very interested in the camelia, and gets nearer and nearer to it—nervously.)*

MR. BULLIVANT *(has turned away from her, and is speaking to RUDDOCK)*. Ah! He took the flower himself. Ah—um—I hoped this flower might have led us somewhere. Disappointing—disappointing! *(Suddenly he catches SUSAN about to touch the camelia, and he is most indignant.)* What are you doing? You've no right to touch that flower. You must be clutching at something! If it isn't your apron—

(SUSAN—who has again been fidgeting with her apron—drops it in disgust.)

—it's the camelia—and if it isn't the camelia, it's something else. You must really try and break yourself of these habits. You must—Hallo! Hallo! What's the matter? What are you sniffing like that for?

(SUSAN is a little upset—almost inclined to cry.)

What is it? Have you got a cold? Why don't you use your

pocket-handkerchief! Why don't you blow your nose! What is it? What is it? (*Banging table.*)

RUDDOCK (*gently—remonstrating*). Pardon me, sir—a little—unkind, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Unkind! Unkind!

RUDDOCK. She's crying, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What! Crying! God bless my soul! Oh, everybody's crying this morning! Unkind! I wasn't unkind. Was I unkind? Was I unkind? Here, here! Here, here's half a sovereign. (*Giving a coin, which he takes from waistcoat pocket.*) Buy a bit o' ribbon—or a nice hat—you can buy a hat for seven and six, can't you? Unkind! I wasn't unkind! (*Turning to RUDDOCK.*) What the devil do you mean by saying I was unkind? Now be good enough to tell me—what did you want this flower for?

SUSAN. Well, I—I wanted to look at it.

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, I didn't think you wanted to eat it. Why did you wish to look at it?

SUSAN. Because I wasn't sure it was the one Mr. Ernest wore last night.

MR. BULLIVANT (*regards her very attentively—then looks at RUDDOCK*). What makes you think that? (*Eats.*)

SUSAN (*hesitating*). Might I just see it a moment, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. Of course, of course—if you've any sound reason. (*Eye-glass here.*)

(*SUSAN takes camelia and looks at it.*)

SUSAN (*firmly*). No, sir; this is not Mr. Ernest's.

MR. BULLIVANT (*again he looks at RUDDOCK*). What makes you think that?

SUSAN. I don't think it, sir—I know it.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, but come, come! Camelias are all very much alike. How do you know it?

SUSAN. Because the one Mr. Ernest wore had a hair tied round the stem.

(*MR. BULLIVANT, eating apple, turns round—choking bus.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. A hair tied round the—you're sure of that? (*Turning to SUSAN in astonishment.*)

SUSAN. Quite sure, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What makes you so sure?

SUSAN. I tied the hair on it myself.

MR. BULLIVANT. What a silly thing to do. Why didn't you use cotton or wire?

SUSAN. There wasn't any in the room, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Rather clever of Mr. Ernest.

SUSAN. Mr. Ernest didn't think of it, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, it was your idea, was it?

SUSAN. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What made you think of it?

(SUSAN turns away and hangs her head embarrassed.)

Now, don't look away—look at me. What made you think of it?

SUSAN. I thought it would make Mr. Keble jealous.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh! Keble was there, was he?

SUSAN. Yes, sir, he came into the room for a moment—to look for Mr. Jarvis's cap to pack.

MR. BULLIVANT. And did your little plan succeed in making the man Keble jealous?

SUSAN. I—I think it did, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What makes you think so?

SUSAN. He made such an awful face!

MR. BULLIVANT. Made such a what?

SUSAN. He made such an awful face.

MR. BULLIVANT. I didn't like his face before. (To RUDDOCK.)

RUDDOCK. No, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Nasty face.

RUDDOCK. Very nasty, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Nasty sloppy face.

RUDDOCK. Very sloppy indeed, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. I'm surprised at your having anything to do with a sloppy-faced man! (He turns away from SUSAN towards the table and looks again at the flower.) But, after all, hair might have come off the camelia, so I don't see——

SUSAN. I don't think so, sir. There was a sort of bud on the stem.

MR. BULLIVANT. What do you mean by a sort of a bud; either it was a bud or not a bud.

SUSAN. It was a little tiny bud.

MR. BULLIVANT. It was a little tiny bud: sounds like Wordsworth.

SUSAN. And we tied the hair above that, and Mr. Ernest laughingly said it would stop on for ever.

MR. BULLIVANT. Show me exactly what you did.

SUSAN. With the hair, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes.

SUSAN. Will you hold the camelia, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. Like that? (Holding up camelia.)

SUSAN. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Or—like that? (Turning it round.)

SUSAN. That'll do, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. I don't care a hang which way I hold it as long as you say which way.

SUSAN. Just as you are holding it now.

(SUSAN pulls out a hair as in ACT I.)

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, I heard the click. Did you hear the click, Ruddock?

RUDDOCK. No, sir. I never heard the click.

MR. BULLIVANT. Your hearing's not what it was.

(SUSAN begins to tie up the camelia.)

(Holding the flower.) I can see the hair with my naked eye! Come here, Ruddock! See if you can see it.

RUDDOCK. No, sir. I can't see it.

MR. BULLIVANT. Your sight is going, too. You're cracking up, my boy.

SUSAN. There, sir—it was just like that—and that won't come off.

MR. BULLIVANT. Wait a bit. (Looks through glass—takes the flower and examines it very closely—he tries to move the hair in vain.) You're perfectly right—it won't come off. It won't come off (Looks at RUDDOCK and sniffs.) I think, Susan, you may go.

(SUSAN is going up.)

Wait, Susan! Was that the last you saw of Mr. Ernest last night?

SUSAN. No, sir, he was in here when I came in to turn out the lights before going to bed.

MR. BULLIVANT. Was there anyone else here?

SUSAN. Not in the room, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What do you mean by "not in the room?" How could anyone be here and not in the room?

SUSAN. He was at the window, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT (his attention arrested). Oh—oh—outside the window?

SUSAN. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What was he doing?

SUSAN. Looking in, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What at?

SUSAN. At me, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. And who was it?

SUSAN. Mr. Keble, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. There you are. (To RUDDOCK.) The man with the face looking through the window. All this is most reprehensible. You will be good enough to say nothing of this to anyone.

SUSAN. No, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. It is most important that you should say nothing.

SUSAN. I hope you don't think I would say anything, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. If I thought you would, I should take you to your room—I should lock you in—and not let you out until this mystery was cleared up.

(SUSAN is going.)



GRUMPY AND SUSAN

I don't at all approve of this philandering with Mr. Ernest—though I blame him a great deal more than I blame you. Be off with you.

(SUSAN goes off quickly.)

(The old man regards her attentively as she goes up; when she is gone he says to RUDDOCK.) I never noticed before, Ruddock, what a charming figure that girl's got.

RUDDOCK. What do you think, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. What about?

RUDDOCK. What do you think of what she has told you, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. The hair round the camelia? If Mr. Ernest should go under, that hair round that camelia may develop into a rope round somebody's neck.

RUDDOCK. You think it's as bad as that, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. I think you may remove the hair from this camelia. (Giving RUDDOCK flower.)

(RUDDOCK removes the hair.)

Who locked up last night?

RUDDOCK. Merridew, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Send him to me.

RUDDOCK (opens door and calls). Merridew!

MR. BULLIVANT (after sipping the coffee). Oh dear! This coffee is absolutely cold! Ruddock!!

(RUDDOCK goes round above table to L. of MR. BULLIVANT.)

What an extraordinary thing it is I—

(MERRIDEW enters R.)

—never can get a decent cup of coffee in my own house. I never saw such a lot of diddering, doddering fools! (Noticing MERRIDEW, who is standing at attention.) Oh!—er—you locked up last night?

MERRIDEW. Yes, sir. (Coughs—L. hand to mouth.) Everywhere but here. Susan told me Mr. Ernest—(Cough)—was in this room when I went to bed. (Coughs.)

MR. BULLIVANT. What's the matter? Got a cold?

MERRIDEW. No, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Then please don't cough over my apple. You noticed nothing wrong last night when you were wandering round in your peregrinations.

MERRIDEW. I never wear them, sir.

(RUDDOCK bursts out laughing. MR. BULLIVANT joins in.)

MR. BULLIVANT (rises). Ah! We'll have a look at the footmarks outside the window.

(MERRIDEW helps the old man up.)

Don't tickle me. (*To RUDDOCK.*) Put that camelia carefully away 'n that box.

(*RUDDOCK places the camelia in box on L. end of table, and goes off L. for hat and coat.*)

(*To MERRIDEW.*) Is it cold?

MERRIDEW. Oh no, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT (*irritably*). Oh no, sir. I mean outside. How can you possibly tell in here if it's cold outside? I never met such a lot of diddering—

(*MERRIDEW hastily goes through window. RUDDOCK has fetched a cloak and hat.*)

(*Suddenly swinging round on RUDDOCK.*) Shut the door—shut that door! Draught enough to blow me off my legs! (*He goes up to L.C. To MERRIDEW.*) Now, is it cold?

(*MERRIDEW re-enters.*)

MERRIDEW. It is a bit chilly, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Of course it's a bit chilly—telling me it wasn't chilly when I knew perfectly well that it was.

(*RUDDOCK puts his hat on sideways, first removing shawl.*)

Don't put my hat on sideways—think I want to look like a Toreador! What's this dirty old thing? That's not my coat.

RUDDOCK. This is your coat, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. That's not my coat.

RUDDOCK. It is your coat, sir!

MR. BULLIVANT. It is my coat! No! No! Don't put my hand in the pocket—put it in the sleeve. I never saw such a lot of diddering, doddering fools as I've got round me.

(*Etc. etc., till he is through the window and out of hearing.*)

(*VIRGINIA now enters, L., quickly, and puts bag on table c. She is dressed for going out.*)

VIRGINIA. Where is Mr. Bullivant?

RUDDOCK. Just gone into the garden, Miss. (*Exits c., carrying shawl.*)

(*VIRGINIA remains at the window watching him.*)

(*JARVIS enters quietly at door B., and for a moment watches her. He is still in evening dress, but wears a heavy motor-coat over it, and still wears the camelia of ACT I. There is rather an up-all-night air about him.*)

JARVIS. What's he doing?

VIRGINIA (*startled*). How quietly you came in!

JARVIS. What's he doing?

VIRGINIA. Grumpy? Looking for traces of burglars!

JARVIS (*down R.C.*). Oh, I see.

VIRGINIA. Why haven't you changed?

JARVIS. Well, there's been a good deal to do. Doctors to fetch—and one thing and another, I simply haven't had a minute.

VIRGINIA. You've been wonderful! We're awfully grateful!

JARVIS (*smiling*). Be careful! I may ask you to prove your gratitude.

VIRGINIA. I'd love to!

JARVIS. Would you?

VIRGINIA (*going down to him*). Try me!

JARVIS. When you reach London, what will you do?

VIRGINIA. Usually, on these occasions, I offer to do anything I can for my aunt. She generally informs me I can do nothing. I kick my heels about for two or three days; then she says she's better, and packs me off here again.

JARVIS. Will you kick your heels about this afternoon?

VIRGINIA. Possibly. Why?

JARVIS (*smiling*). Now, then, for the gratitude.

VIRGINIA (*smiling*). Go on.

JARVIS. Kick your heels about—with me.

VIRGINIA. Meet you?

JARVIS. I'm only five minutes' from your aunt's.

VIRGINIA. Well?

JARVIS. Come round about teatime.

VIRGINIA. I couldn't. (*Turns away.*)

JARVIS. You could.

VIRGINIA. You know I ought not to do it. (*A step L.*)

JARVIS. Do!

VIRGINIA (*turns to JARVIS*). After all, there wouldn't be any harm in it, would there? I'm not wanted here; they won't even let me see Ernest.

JARVIS. You see, I may be going abroad this evening.

VIRGINIA. Going abroad?

JARVIS. Then we shan't see each other for some time.

VIRGINIA. You never told me—(*Stops at chair and looks round — you were going abroad. (Goes up C. to R. of camelia tree.)*)

JARVIS (*looking over R. shoulder*). Half-Moon Street—about five! (*Up to her.*)

VIRGINIA (*after a moment*). It would be interesting.

JARVIS. About five.

VIRGINIA. You promise you won't keep me long?

JARVIS. I won't promise anything.

VIRGINIA. Oh, but you must.

JARVIS. You shall go whenever you like.

(VIRGINIA *breaks a camelia from the plant in the room—and goes with it to JARVIS.*)

For me?

VIRGINIA (*removing the faded flower in JARVIS's coat and putting fresh one in his buttonhole.*) This poor dear's nearly dead.

JARVIS. That is sweet of you. Now we've both got a camelia. Isn't there some sort of a game—where two people get hold of—er—two things alike—two kernels in one nutshell?

VIRGINIA. Oh, you mean Philippine.

JARVIS. Yes—what is it?

VIRGINIA. Well, you each keep one. And the next time you meet—not the same day, of course—it's generally to-morrow—the one who says Philippine first—wins.

JARVIS. Oh yes, of course—that's it—I remember. And the winner receives some little prize—doesn't she? Well, now, you look out to-morrow—Philippine—I shall win.

VIRGINIA. You won't. (*Is above table, L.C.*)

JARVIS. I will!

VIRGINIA. We'll see. (*Drops camelia in her bag, which is on L. end of table.*)

JARVIS (*puts his camelia in his coat*). It can't be the same day, you say. (*Down to back of chair behind table.*)

VIRGINIA. Oh no!

JARVIS. Because I was thinking of when you come round this afternoon.

VIRGINIA. But I'm not sure that I am coming round.

JARVIS. Oh, I think you *are*.

VIRGINIA. Am I?

JARVIS. I think you *are*.

VIRGINIA. We shall see.

JARVIS. About five.

(MR. BULLIVANT *returns with RUDDOCK. The old man comes fussily in, talking all the time. RUDDOCK takes MR. BULLIVANT's coat and hat. VIRGINIA goes up and meets them.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. It's perfectly useless! If a pack of people are wandering about the grounds, all traces are bound to be obliterated. I really don't— (*Sees VIRGINIA.*)

(JARVIS *goes up L.*)

(*Notices her dress.*) What's this hat—hat—what for—hat?

VIRGINIA. Put it on for the motor!

MR. BULLIVANT. Eh? Oh yes, to be sure—of course, you're going to London. Has the Colonel arrived?

VIRGINIA. Not yet. He'll be here at any moment—

MR. BULLIVANT. Silly old idiot, he's always late! Give him my

compliments. Of course—too occupied to see anyone. Er—
(*Suddenly*)—I don't much like your going, you know

(JARVIS is up by door L.)

VIRGINIA. Well, then, I won't go!

(JARVIS turns at this, listening.)

MR. BULLIVANT (*sits*). Of course you'll go—

(JARVIS goes out.)

Not nice for you here—not nice—besides, I suppose I wish you to go— (*By this time he is in his chair again.*)

VIRGINIA. Why, where's your cushion?

MR. BULLIVANT. Eh? Oh, my lord, what is she saying now.

VIRGINIA. Where's the cushion I put for you? (*Searching settee.*)

(MR. BULLIVANT is now unnaturally busy looking for a pen.
Then innocently he says.)

MR. BULLIVANT. You asked me something?

VIRGINIA. Where's the cushion? (*Crossing to L.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, the cushion?

VIRGINIA. I put a nice cushion here—what have you done with it?

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh yes, a dear little cushion! (*In desperation.*)
It's that old idiot Ruddock, my love. He's got into the habit of hiding things. (*Busy with papers.*)

VIRGINIA (*goes up to RUDDOCK R.*). Why did you—?

RUDDOCK (*R. above settee—aside to her*). Old gentleman's orders, Miss—didn't want you to know.

(VIRGINIA looks at the old man and laughs. She then goes to him, puts her arms round his neck impulsively, rubbing her face against his arm, on her knees by the old man.)

(Exit RUDDOCK C.)

MR. BULLIVANT. What is it? You want something?

VIRGINIA (*coaxingly*). I don't want to go.

MR. BULLIVANT. But I wish you to go.

VIRGINIA (*R. of him*). Yes, I know—you're always wishing me to do things I don't want to.

MR. BULLIVANT. Your life is a perpetual self-sacrifice.

VIRGINIA. I hate you when you talk like that!

MR. BULLIVANT (*chuckles*). Oh no, you don't.

VIRGINIA. You may laugh, but you'd hate it if I went away.

MR. BULLIVANT (*pleasantly*). Should I?

VIRGINIA. You know you would! Supposing I died?

MR. BULLIVANT (*seriously*). Hush, my dear!

VIRGINIA. I might—lots of young girls die. (*Going round back of chair to L.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Hush, my dear—you must never joke about death.

(*VIRGINIA looks at MR. BULLIVANT and kisses him on forehead.*)

VIRGINIA (*taking the box in which is the camelia*). What's in this!

MR. BULLIVANT (*quickly*). Nothing. (*Attempting to take it.*)

VIRGINIA (*L. of MR. BULLIVANT*). Then why do you want it! May I see?

MR. BULLIVANT. No, my dear.

VIRGINIA. "My dear!" Something serious in this box.

MR. BULLIVANT. Why do you say that?

VIRGINIA. It's always something serious when you call me "my dear."

MR. BULLIVANT. Give it to me.

VIRGINIA. Do let me see.

MR. BULLIVANT. No.

VIRGINIA. Oh, do.

MR. BULLIVANT. No.

(*VIRGINIA, going R., gives it to him.*)

VIRGINIA. Take your old box! (*She goes up and then passes to the right-hand side of him, and in a wheedling voice says.*) Darling Grumpy—dear thing. (*Whispers.*) Let me see what's in the box! (*Grabbing at it.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. No. (*He covers her hand with his.*)

(*Pause.*)

VIRGINIA (*very deliberately*). No wonder I christened you Grumpy!

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, you didn't mean that, did you? (*Smiles.*)

(*RUDDOCK enters C.*)

VIRGINIA. Good-bye, Grumpy!

MR. BULLIVANT (*holding her close*). Good-bye.

VIRGINIA. You think Ernest will be all right?

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes—the doctor says—

VIRGINIA. Yes, I know—the doctor told me.

(*RUDDOCK comes down and opens door and stands holding it open.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Come—a smile! (*Takes VIRGINIA's hands.*)

(*She smiles at him.*)

Ah, there's my Jinny— (*Kisses her.*) God bless you—God

bless you, my darling. Send me a wire when you get there. Give my love to your Aunt and tell her——

(RUDDOCK—who is showing her out—shuts door.)

Don't shut the door when I'm talking to her!

(RUDDOCK opens door.)

No, it's too late now! She's gone round the corner. I never saw such a lot of diddering, doddering fools—— (*Is still for a moment.*) I don't like that child going away, Ruddock. I haven't many years, and I'm never really happy when she's out o' my sight.

RUDDOCK (*coming to c. below settee*). You're looking very worn, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, I feel very worn, too.

RUDDOCK. Hadn't you better postpone the inquiry?

MR. BULLIVANT (*indignant suddenly*). Postpone the inquiry! Don't be a ridiculous ass! How can I possibly postpone the inquiry?

RUDDOCK. Very good, sir. May I suggest, sir, if you wish to see Mr. Jarvis, it would be as well to see him now?

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, I do wish to see Mr. Jarvis.

RUDDOCK. Mr. Jarvis. (*Calls off door B.*)

(RUDDOCK comes down.)

(MR. BULLIVANT has taken the camelia from the box and is looking at it thoughtfully.)

MR. BULLIVANT. We've made one discovery, and it's an important one, Ruddock. We know the camelia we have is *not* the camelia we want.

RUDDOCK (C.). Ah, but where is the camelia we want, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. We want every camelia we can find until we get the right one.

MERRIDEW. Mr. Jarvis!

(JARVIS enters B.)

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah, Mr. Jarvis, I owe you so much already—I am almost ashamed to further trespass on your kindness.

JARVIS. Oh, it's nothing!

MR. BULLIVANT. Nothing. I hear you've done wonders. Getting poor Ernest up to his room on the second floor and rushing for the doctor—then rushing for another——

JARVIS (*down B.C.*). Yes, that's why I'm like this. (*Alluding to evening dress, which he still wears beneath a heavy motor-coat.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. What! Not even time to change? (*Rises.*) Dear, dear! I really am most grateful!

JARVIS. Oh no!

MR. BULLIVANT. Now, I won't detain you a moment. You were the first to find Mr. Heron? Did you notice anything last night which might give us any idea as to the sort of person who could have committed this outrage?

JARVIS. No, no, no! (*Pause between each "No."*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Nothing lying about—on the floor or anywhere?

JARVIS. I didn't notice anything.

MR. BULLIVANT (*at R. of table*). Now, will you tell me how you found him? He was, I understand, on the hearthrug—

JARVIS (*crossing to the fire-place L.*). Yes—just here.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah! Now what exactly was the position—?

JARVIS. Well, his head was—er—close to the fender—

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah! Yes, Ruddock told me, and his arms—were they—outstretched?

JARVIS. Yes—er—the simplest way will be for me to show you. (*Quickly taking off overcoat.*) I'll take the position myself. (*Is about to lie down, puts overcoat over left shoulder.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Eh? Oh, well—it's very kind—oh, but no, no! I couldn't think of it—(*Sudden thought*)—er—Ruddock, you saw Mr. Heron—

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Why don't you take up the position. Please—please.

(RUDDOCK rather elaborately proceeds to lie on the hearth-rug. MR. BULLIVANT and JARVIS watching attentively. In reclining RUDDOCK hits his head against the fender, sits hurriedly up and rubs his head. Lies down again, hitting his head.)

What are you rolling about for? Have you settled down now? Is that the position?

JARVIS. Yes, that's just about it. (*Rests on table.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*closely examining RUDDOCK—crossing L.*). His head is touching the fender.

JARVIS. Yes—Mr. Heron's head was touching the fender.

MR. BULLIVANT (*crosses to RUDDOCK*). Oh, it was! This is important. Your head is— Here, here, you're not asleep, are you?

RUDDOCK. No, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Your head is touching the fender—isn't it, Ruddock?

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir. My head struck the fender.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, his head struck the fender, Jarvis! That's all right, then.

JARVIS. Couldn't the blow have been caused by the head striking the fender? (*Puts coat on arm-chair.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh no—the doctor's disposed of that. (*Crossing back R.C.*)

(JARVIS comes to C.)



GRUMPY AND VIRGINIA

The attack was from the front, the blow was evidently from the front. The fellow raised his weapon—or whatever it was—and brought it down—and brought it down. (*In illustrating his meaning he is face to face with JARVIS, and for the first time sees the flower in JARVIS'S coat—his arm remains in mid-air, and he gazes speechlessly at the camelia—there is a moment's pause.*)

RUDDOCK (*on floor*). Beg pardon, sir—may I get up?

MR. BULLIVANT (*unable to take his eyes off the camelia*). Eh? . . . Oh! Oh yes, get up, get up!

JARVIS helps RUDDOCK up. MR. BULLIVANT turns as he crosses, still gazing at the camelia. RUDDOCK also now sees flower. As JARVIS helps him up he stares at the camelia, so that at that moment both MR. BULLIVANT and RUDDOCK are almost spellbound.)

JARVIS (*going up to window c.*). Did you notice, sir, if the window has been tampered with? (*Examines the window at back.*)

MR. BULLIVANT mysteriously beckons RUDDOCK, with one eye on JARVIS. In pantomime he indicates to RUDDOCK the camelia in JARVIS'S coat. RUDDOCK nods, understanding. MR. BULLIVANT is fearfully excited. He takes the camelia box and places it on the edge of the table.)

MR. BULLIVANT. Can't quite make out the blow, Jarvis.

JARVIS (*comes down R.C.*). I'm inclined to the fender—— (*R. of MR. BULLIVANT below table.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh no, no, no! Now, let us get this right. Now, a moment—you are Heron—and I am the burglar—— (*Placing JARVIS in front of him.*) Now then—if I attack you so—— (*Grasping JARVIS with both hands.*) Oh, pardon me—I've pulled your tie out. I'm sorry. (*Goes round to back of JARVIS—bus. : With RUDDOCK—finger on lips.*) Now, let us try again. Supposing I bring my arm round this way—— (*Grasping JARVIS round the waist.*) Oh, I'm sorry, I've torn your waistcoat, haven't I?

JARVIS. No; it's all right, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, I thought I heard the lining go. (*Passing at the back of JARVIS again he, knowingly, signals to RUDDOCK to look out.*) No, it must have been this way—— (*Again grasping JARVIS with both hands, one hand coming down on the camelia.*) Oh, I shall crush this flower. I think I had better remove it.

JARVIS. Oh no; don't bother!

MR. BULLIVANT. Eh? Oh, but it'll get crushed.

JARVIS. Oh, very well.

(MR. BULLIVANT takes the flower out and places it on table behind him—then he turns to JARVIS again. RUDDOCK eagerly watching L.)

MR. BULLIVANT. Now, let's get this quite right. The lights are

probably out—I, the burglar—ah, but you wouldn't be there. You'd be over by the fire. (*He turns JARVIS round so that JARVIS's back is now to the table—the moment this happens, with a hand behind his back he changes the camelia—takes the one out of the box and puts JARVIS's into box in its place.*) Seeing me about to attack you, you'd probably step back, down comes my weapon, and crash, you are on the floor! Clear as daylight!

(*Enter MERRIDEW R.*)

MERRIDEW. The car is waiting, sir—if Mr. Jarvis is ready.

MR. BULLIVANT. Is Miss Virginia in the car? (*Going over to door R.*)

MERRIDEW. Yes, sir.

(*RUDDOCK gives JARVIS his coat.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, well, she mustn't be kept in the cold—

JARVIS. Nothing more I can do? (*Crosses R.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh no, nothing—nothing, I thank you.

JARVIS. Well, good-bye, sir. Thanks for a most charming visit

MR. BULLIVANT. Good-bye—good-bye.

JARVIS. Oh—er—my flower.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, pardon me, yes, of course—of course. Your flower; will you please fetch it?

JARVIS (*crosses to table and fetches camelia*). Thank you—good bye.

MR. BULLIVANT. Good-bye—good-bye!

(*JARVIS goes off R.*)

(*The moment the door closes, MR. BULLIVANT and RUDDOCK swing round on to the camelia in the box. They remove and examine it.*)

The magnifying glass, Ruddock, the magnifying glass!

(*RUDDOCK hands him the glass and camelia. He is as keen.*)

(*After a moment.*) The hair is not here. (*Handing flower to RUDDOCK.*)

RUDDOCK. Not a sign of it, sir! (*Puts flower and glass on table.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*sinking on to settee*). This detective business is really very trying, Ruddock. After all, the man was my guest—I am glad the hair is not here.

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. He must have thought it very extraordinary of me; do you think he thought me rude?

RUDDOCK. No, sir—perhaps—er—a little eccentric, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Eccentric! Eccentric be damned; he couldn't have thought me eccentric! I must go and apologize to him—

(*The motor horn is heard.*)

RUDDOCK. Just going, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What's that. The car? Shall I be in time?

RUDDOCK. I think so, sir. (*Going up to window.*) There they are, passing the Lodge.

MR. BULLIVANT (*at window*). Can she see me?

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir, she's waving, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah, good-bye, my darling. Good-bye. (*Signalling with bandana.*)

(*Enter SUSAN.*)

SUSAN. If you please, sir—

MR. BULLIVANT. Good-bye—good— (*Turns and sees SUSAN— at once irritable and rather chokey as well.*) What is it?—what is it?

SUSAN. If you please, sir, can I speak to you?

MR. BULLIVANT. No, no. Go away! What is it?

SUSAN. If you please, sir—if you please, sir—I've seen it.

MR. BULLIVANT (*still angry*). Seen what?

SUSAN. The camelia, sir. The camelia with the hair round the stem.

(*This fixes the old man; he simply stares at her. No one moves.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*very quietly*). Ruddock! (*Motions to RUDDOCK to close windows and door R.*)

RUDDOCK. All right, sir.

(*RUDDOCK closes the door carefully. MR. BULLIVANT beckons SUSAN and goes to his chair C.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Now, tell me—where did you see it?

SUSAN. I was packing, and it fell out of Miss Virginia's bag.

MR. BULLIVANT. Miss Virginia! How did she get it?

SUSAN. I don't know, sir!

MR. BULLIVANT. Mr. Ernest must have given it to her.

SUSAN. He couldn't have, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Why not?

SUSAN. Because when I came in to turn out the lights last night he still had it in his buttonhole. Miss Virginia had gone to bed, and she hasn't seen him since.

MR. BULLIVANT. Where is it now?

SUSAN. Miss Virginia has taken it to London with her. I was going to throw it away when she said she wished to keep it.

(*Pause. The old man is in deep thought.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. That will do.

(*SUSAN goes L.*)

Ruddock, give me the railway time-table, the—oh dear, I shall forget my own name next—the Bradshaw.

(*RUDDOCK hands it to him.*)

No, no, this is the Continental Bradshaw.

(RUDDOCK *opens it at the Index.*)

Oh no, it is the right Bradshaw. Oh *dear*, give me the magnifying glass. Why the devil do they want to print it so small. I can't see this Index.

(*Thinks hard, tapping his forehead, and uttering the following words at intervals—meanwhile trying to find a train. RUDDOCK quietly watching him.*)

Ernest last night was wearing a camelia with a hair round the stem, but when he was discovered this morning a camelia was found clutched in his hand, but it had no hair round the stem. Virginia is now in possession of the camelia with the hair round the stem—seems anxious to keep it. . . . Why? Why do young women want to keep faded flowers? See page four hundred and thirteen. . . . Some man!—Ernest? No. Ernest was wearing it after she went to bed. . . . Not Ernest. Well, there's no one else—except Jarvis—Jarvis? No, not Jarvis. . . . Refer to page—five hundred and forty-nine. Oh, what a book! What a rotten book! (*Remembering—slowly.*) Jarvis has been paying Virginia a good deal of attention, I've noticed that. I wonder if he gave her the camelia? Oh no. Jarvis was the first to find Ernest last night.

(*Pause.*)

He said he saw nothing about the room—I wonder if he picked up the camelia without attaching any importance to it—he might have—and he might have given it to Virginia. I'd better see Virginia, and if her evidence should throw no light on the subject it would be rather interesting to call on Mr. Jarvis—and—Keble—the man with the face. Ruddock, order the brougham to catch the next train to London.

RUDDOCK. Which train, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. Wait a moment and I'll tell you. The one that goes at—no, that's Monday's only—the one that goes at—dammit that's Tuesday's only. Ah, here it is, the one that starts at—Stop! Ah—no—here it is. The one that starts— Why, that never starts at all. Oh, here, you find it, Ruddock.

RUDDOCK. I don't understand it, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. No more do I—no more do I, and if I had the compiler of this volume here, this Mr. Bradshaw—I'd—I'd wring his neck. He never could write a book, and never will be able to write a book as long as he lives. (*Kicking Bradshaw.*)

(RUDDOCK *looking on—laughing.*)

(*The CURTAIN falls.*)

The ACT plays 37 minutes.

ACT III

The SCENE is MR. JARVIS'S rooms in London. Everything in the very best taste; evidence of wealth and refinement. Everything quite artistic and up to date, in contrast with the solid early Victorian mahogany furniture of the previous ACTS.

(JARVIS enters up R., followed by KEBLE. JARVIS just having changed.)

KEBLE. Feeling better, sir?

JARVIS. Yes; I've had forty winks—I feel a bit fresher. I was up all night.

KEBLE. Indeed, sir! Not ill, I hope?

JARVIS. Er—a lady—er—what time is it?

KEBLE. About five o'clock, sir.

JARVIS *(going R.)*. Miss Bullivant will call. Bring her up. Oh!—you'll find a flower in my dress coat—just get it. *(Sits on settee R.)*

KEBLE. Yes, sir. *(Goes off R.)*

(JARVIS arranges some flowers which were on small table R.C.)

KEBLE returns with the camelia; hands it to JARVIS, who puts it in his coat.)

(Alluding to flowers on table R.C.). Shall I arrange the flowers, sir?

JARVIS. No; I'll do that myself. Be sure she comes up.

KEBLE. Yes, sir.

JARVIS. Oh, and put the bowl on that table.

(KEBLE fetches bowl from up stage R., and puts it on lower end of table.)

JARVIS commences to arrange the flowers.)

No, I was not ill. *(Pause.)* Had a burglary after you left last night.

KEBLE *(c., on R. of table)*. Really, sir?

JARVIS. Attempted one, anyhow. Mr. Heron was rather badly handled.

KEBLE. Injured, sir?

JARVIS. Yes; I'm afraid so. Unconscious when I left. I think he'll pull through, from what the doctor says. I was the first to find him. Heard a noise when I was going to bed, went—*(Crosses to L.)*—down and found the library all upset, and Mr. Heron unconscious

on the floor. Then, of course, there was no going back to bed. (*Sits.*) Give me the water.

(KEBLE brings water from table at back, R.)

I called Ruddock, the valet, and between us we got him upstairs to bed, then I went off for the doctor——

KEBLE. Anything stolen, sir?

JARVIS. Apparently not. Evidently Mr. Heron disturbed them.

KEBLE. No clue at all, sir, as to who——?

JARVIS. Nothing. (*Starts putting flowers in bowl.*)

KEBLE. Must have upset the old gentleman a good deal, sir.

JARVIS. Yes. He seems to be more annoyed than anything else at not being called. They decided to keep it from him till this morning.

KEBLE. I suppose he would be annoyed.

JARVIS. Yes. He was hard at work investigating when I left. Wonderful old gentleman, Keble.

KEBLE. Remarkable, sir! Does he suspect anyone—not any of us, I hope, sir——

JARVIS. Us?

KEBLE. Any of the servants, sir.

JARVIS. No. No, I don't think so.

KEBLE. Excuse me asking, sir, but did Miss Bullivant's maid, Susan, sir—did she seem to be particularly upset about Mr. Heron being hurt?

JARVIS (*without taking any special interest*). Why she, more than anyone else? Have you a special interest in Susan, Keble?

KEBLE. Well—yes I have, sir.

JARVIS. Oh—indeed.

KEBLE. Yes, sir. I have hopes in that quarter, sir.

JARVIS. Really.

KEBLE. She seemed to be on pretty good terms with Mr. Heron, sir—and she was encouraging him to make himself uncommon pleasant to her, sir. Oh! I think to make me jealous, sir. At least, I hope it was that. She was in the room with him last night just before I went to catch my train, sir. I wanted to see her to say good-bye, and I saw her through the window.

JARVIS (*smiling*). You surely don't suppose——

KEBLE. I don't suppose anything, except her wanting to tease me: just as she did when she offered to tie up a flower for Mr. Ernest with a hair from her head, sir.

JARVIS (*becoming interested*). What was that?

KEBLE. Well, I happened to come into the room soon after Mr. Heron arrived, and he had a flower in his hand for his coat; he wanted a bit of cotton to tie it up—and Susan hadn't any cotton—and then she saw me, and just to tease me she pulled a hair out of her head, and together they tied up the camelia with that.

(JARVIS rises and pours out water. KEBLE picks up paper from flowers and puts it in waste-paper basket, C., by table L.)

JARVIS (after a moment). What became of that flower?

KEBLE. Oh, he put it in his coat. Excuse me, sir, the bowl's full—the water's runnin' over.

JARVIS (pulling himself together). Oh! Yes—silly of me! Bring a cloth.

(KEBLE goes R. as if to fetch duster, comes back and wipes up the water.)

KEBLE. Anything else you want, sir?

(JARVIS does not notice him and, after a moment, KEBLE goes out R.)

JARVIS is lost in thought. He sinks into chair by table L., and is for the a time quite still, thinking.)

(Pause.)

JARVIS. Awkward. Damned awkward. (Rises and goes up to back of stage lost in thought—he then calls.) Keble! Keble!

KEBLE (off R.). Yes, sir! (Enters R.)

JARVIS. Keble, I think if I were you—it isn't likely you'll be questioned about this business at all—but if you are, I don't think I'd mention what you've told me. After all, it was a trifling thing, and—er—Mr. Heron had probably known her for years—and it might place the girl in an awkward position.

KEBLE. Yes, sir.

JARVIS. You see my meaning, don't you?

KEBLE. Oh yes, sir! I shan't say a word, sir.

JARVIS. I think it will be better to say nothing.

(Bell. A sudden sharp ring below. JARVIS almost starts.)

Who's that?

(KEBLE looks out of window.)

KEBLE. Miss Bullivant, sir. (Goes towards door L.)

JARVIS. Remember—up here.

KEBLE. Yes, sir. (Exits.)

(JARVIS is left alone. He stands for a moment in deep thought. Then a sudden thought comes to him, and he removes the camelia from his coat; quickly goes to the fire and very carefully places the flower in fire with poker and pokes it down. KEBLE re-enters.)

(Announcing). Miss Bullivant!

(VIRGINIA enters. JARVIS leaves the fire to meet her. VIRGINIA comes very cautiously in, a timid, child-like creature. She waits till KEBLE exits.)

VIRGINIA. What a charming room! (*Crossing R.C.*)

JARVIS. What a charming frock! (*Taking her sunshade.*)

VIRGINIA. I knew you'd like it. (*Still very subdued.*) This feels like Bluebeard's chamber. (*Sits on settee R.*)

JARVIS. Am I Bluebeard?

VIRGINIA. I was thinking of Grumpy. How furious he would be! But I did want to come. What is it about you. You seem to draw me on in spite of myself. I feel somehow—nothing—when I am with you. Yet I like being with you. Why should I want to see you?

JARVIS (*caressingly*). It's because I've been thinking so much about you—because I've been wanting so much to see you. (*Arranging a cushion for her, taking it from L. of settee.*)

VIRGINIA. Don't make me too comfortable. I mustn't stay a minute. I'm a little afraid of you; and the worst of it is I like the feeling. (*Putting her hand in front of JARVIS's eyes.*) Don't look at me like that! You seem to look right through me. I wonder what is going on behind that big forehead of yours.

JARVIS. At present there's a good deal of confusion going on—the one thing that is clear is that you are here.

VIRGINIA. I know nothing whatever about you really, you know. I don't even know what you are! What are you?

JARVIS. Well—I—er—tell me—what about the aunt? (*Sits by her.*)

VIRGINIA (*laughing*). Oh, aunt is very ill. Her doctor told her there was nothing the matter with her. She called him a fool, and threatened to send for some one else; whereupon he said she had a nervous breakdown, and ordered her off to bed. At first she simply refused to go—but when I explained that Ernest wouldn't be able to come, she was very cross, and said she should go to bed and stay there till he *did* come, and off she went. Now she won't see anyone—not even me.

JARVIS. Very well, then. Now I want you to come and see me off

VIRGINIA. See you off?

JARVIS. Yes.

VIRGINIA. You are going away, then?

JARVIS. Yes—to-night. Will you come and see me off?

VIRGINIA. Victoria or Charing Cross?

JARVIS. Dover.

VIRGINIA. Dover! (*In an awed tone.*)

JARVIS (*imitating her tone*). Dover! Why not?

VIRGINIA. I'd love it! The excitement of it! I have so little excitement. Grumpy—I love Grumpy better than anyone else in the world—but Grumpy does seem so—so old—sometimes. (*Pause.*) What time should I be back?

JARVIS. Oh, you won't be late.

(*Pause.*)

VIRGINIA. I'm sorry you're going away. (*Turning her head away.*)

JARVIS. Will you miss me when I go?

VIRGINIA. Of course I shall.

JARVIS. Will you? (*Drawing closer and closer to her.*) I love you. You know it. (*Pause.*) Don't you?

(JARVIS now gently attempts to caress her.)

VIRGINIA (*rises*). Don't! Don't! (*She moves to fire-place.*)

JARVIS (*rises*). The train leaves Victoria at 6.50. Can you remember?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

JARVIS. We'd better meet at the train.

VIRGINIA (*crossing L.*). I'm only thinking—supposing when I go back now there is anything which might prevent my coming? (*Stands with back to him.*)

JARVIS. I'd thought of that.

VIRGINIA. I'll wire you. (*Turns to JARVIS.*)

JARVIS (*very deliberately*). No, don't wire. Anyone might find you—writing it.

VIRGINIA. I hate all that!

JARVIS. I've a much better idea—much safer, and really rather romantic. (*Smiling.*)

VIRGINIA. What is it?

JARVIS. How old are you?

VIRGINIA. Twenty.

JARVIS. Do you know how old I am?

(VIRGINIA shakes her head.)

Forty-two. Ah! That makes you open your eyes, doesn't it.

VIRGINIA. Oh, I never think of those things.

JARVIS. Do you think old forty-two has any right to be romantic?

VIRGINIA. How do you mean?

JARVIS (*after a short pause*). I was very unhappy soon after we reached town. (*Goes to fire and leans on mantel, back to her.*)

VIRGINIA. Why?

JARVIS. Do you remember giving me a flower this morning?

VIRGINIA. The Philippine?

JARVIS. Yes.

VIRGINIA (*laughing*). Oh, you've lost it.

(JARVIS nods.)

You want another?

JARVIS. Yes.

VIRGINIA (*alluding to the flowers on the table L.*). One of these?

JARVIS. I don't want a flower from a florist. I want one——

VIRGINIA. From me? I haven't got one.

JARVIS. You had one this morning.

VIRGINIA. The one I took from you?

JARVIS. Yes. The one I wore last night. Have you got that still?

VIRGINIA. No; I gave it away.

JARVIS (*excitedly*). You didn't.

VIRGINIA (*quickly, in mock terror*). No, no, no! I didn't—I didn't—don't be so excited; and don't be so bad-tempered.

JARVIS. You kept it? (*Very relieved*.) It was sweet of you! Send me that.

VIRGINIA. It belonged to you first.

JARVIS. Then it belonged to you.

VIRGINIA. And now you want it to belong to you again?

JARVIS. Yes, please.

VIRGINIA. It has quite a little history, hasn't it?

JARVIS. Yes. Put it in a little box—send it by a special messenger. Then I shall know nothing will prevent your coming with me to Dover. Will you promise this?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

JARVIS. Sure?

VIRGINIA. How serious you are! Do you want it so much?

JARVIS. Yes. I shall feel happier if I have it with me when I go away. (*Takes her hands.*) And—and I want you, Virginia, I love you. I never thought I should really love anyone——

The door handle turns and KEBLE enters. VIRGINIA gets away and goes up C. a little.

KEBLE. Mr.——

JARVIS (*who has gone B. a little, quickly*). Some one to see me?

KEBLE. Yes.

(*VIRGINIA, in alarm, makes a dash for her sunshade.*)

VIRGINIA. Some one to see you? Will he see me? Oh! supposing he sees me! (*Goes to settee and gets sunshade.*)

JARVIS. He won't eat you. 6.50, Victoria.

VIRGINIA. Yes, yes. Good-bye. (*Going.*)

JARVIS. Don't forget the flower.

(*Both C.*)

VIRGINIA. No, no. Good-bye. (*Goes to door.*)

(*MR. VALENTINE WOLFE enters. A benevolent old Jew; exceedingly well and quietly dressed. He discreetly bows as VIRGINIA passes him. She does not acknowledge him in her anxiety to get away.*)

WOLFE. How do you do, Mr. Jarvis?

JARVIS (to WOLFE). How are you? Excuse me a moment. (Going off with VIRGINIA.) Let me see you down. So very kind of you to bring the message yourself. (Etc., as VIRGINIA and JARVIS go off L.)

(WOLFE watches them off, then he goes up to the window, and half-concealing himself behind the curtain, watches, following VIRGINIA, as it were, up the street. Then he leaves the window, shaking his head solemnly and comes to above settee R.)

WOLFE. If that young woman isn't very careful—ah! Well, it's no business of mine.

(JARVIS re-enters L.)

(In an unpleasant tone.) I expected to find you alone. Who is the baby? (Coming down C.)

JARVIS. That'll do, Wolfe, drop it.

WOLFE (surprised at his tone). Oh, oh. Not serious, I hope—when a man of your sort gets serious about female flummery it's usually dangerous.

JARVIS. Don't jump to conclusions, Wolfe. You ought to know me better than to think I shall lose my head. In this case she may help to avoid danger. But we'll come to that later on. (Crossing to fire-place R.)

WOLFE (watching him). Got it? (Quite casually—sits R.O.)

(JARVIS takes diamond from pocket and hands it to WOLFE. WOLFE examines the stone with the air of one quite accustomed to precious stones. He adjusts his glasses and makes quite a business of the examination.)

Rummy shape! Beautiful thing, ain't it?

(JARVIS simply stands watching him, taking a cigarette out, as interested, apparently, in the cigarette as in the diamond.)

JARVIS. Faultless!

WOLFE. Clever fellow! (Laughing.)

JARVIS. Oh, it was interesting!

WOLFE. How did you manage it?

JARVIS (sits on sofa). I knew my best chance would be during its journey between Southampton and London. Mr. Bullivant lives between Southampton and London. I cultivated the Bullivants and was asked there to stay. When the boat arrived at Southampton, fortunately for us late at night, Mr. Heron was met by a telegram from the head of the firm at this end—sent by me—

(WOLFE chuckles.)

—making an appointment for early this morning.

WOLFE. So Heron was delayed for the night?

JARVIS. It resolved itself into an hotel or his uncle's house. His uncle's house contained his uncle's granddaughter——

WOLFE. Yes—we're coming to her later on.

JARVIS. And, as I anticipated, when we all went to bed last night, his uncle's house contained the diamond as well.

WOLFE. Clever feller! (*Chuckling.*) Clever feller!

JARVIS. It required thinking out—that's all. (*Crossing to L.C.*)

WOLFE. Ah! But it required getting, too. Did you have much trouble?

(JARVIS does not answer. WOLFE is still busy with the stone.)

JARVIS. I've seen nothing finer than that stone.

WOLFE. No; there's only three or four better than this on top of the earth. Yes—it's all right; I'll give you the price. Shall I take it with me?

JARVIS. If you like—yes.

WOLFE. Call on me to-morrow. We can settle up. (*Carefully putting diamond in his pocket.*)

JARVIS. Well, I'm thinking of going abroad for a day or two. I'll call when I return. (*Sits on seat L.*)

WOLFE (*suddenly interested*). Going abroad, eh? (*Pause.*) Did you have much trouble? Did you have much trouble?

JARVIS (*thoughtfully*). Well—yes—I—I did!

(WOLFE looks at him quickly for a moment, but thinks nothing of it.)

WOLFE. Well, a stone like that represents a blessed lot o' money, and you can't make a blessed lot o' money without a blessed lot of trouble. Nothing serious, I hope?

JARVIS (*slowly*). No—I don't think so.

(WOLFE regards JARVIS with much attention.)

WOLFE (*rises and goes L.C. to him*). I don't altogether like your tone. What do you mean by saying you don't think so? Surely you haven't been and made any mistake? (*Tries to see JARVIS's face.*)

(JARVIS turns in his seat and does not reply. He is thinking deeply.)

I believe you have! And yet, it's not at all like you to do anything silly.

JARVIS. In a sudden emergency one may sometimes act without thinking.

WOLFE (*slowly comes to C., and then faces him quickly*). You've made some mistake, my friend.

JARVIS. I may, this time, have made—a slight mistake.

(This is enough for WOLFE. He attentively regards JARVIS for a

moment ; takes a step R., then he very deliberately takes the diamond from his waistcoat pocket, hands it back to JARVIS, putting it in his R. hand and closing the fingers on it ; he then moves away R., shaking his hands as if he wanted to put the whole affair away from him.)

What does this mean ?

WOLFE. My dear young feller, my lad, I've got a beautiful house on Clapham Common, full of beautiful furniture and surrounded by a beautiful garden. And that beautiful house and beautiful furniture and beautiful garden isn't kept together by slight mistakes. What was it ? (*Sitting.*)

JARVIS (*slowly*). Well, there was a struggle, do you see ?

WOLFE (*amazed and horrified. Up*). Struggle—struggle !

JARVIS. Yes, I had to lay him out.

WOLFE. Lay him out—not badly ?

JARVIS. Yes, I'm afraid so.

WOLFE. You fool. (*Comes c.*)

JARVIS. Well, I couldn't help it. And afterwards I missed a flower I had been wearing—a camelia. He must have clawed it out of my coat when he grabbed hold of me. Then I saw one on the floor. I picked it up and put it in my coat.

WOLFE. Go on.

JARVIS. It now appears that Heron was wearing a camelia, and I'm wondering whether the one I picked up might have been his

WOLFE. Well, one camelia is just like another——

JARVIS. Yes ; but it so happens that the one Heron wore could if it got into the right hands, be identified.

WOLFE. How ?

JARVIS. It's got a hair tied round the stem.

WOLFE. A hair—a hair ! What's become of it ?

JARVIS. Miss Bullivant has it.

WOLFE. You must get it—you must get it at any cost !

JARVIS. I've got the diamond, I'm inclined to skip across the water, camelia or not.

WOLFE. Well, it's your affair—not mine. (*Going up c.*)

JARVIS. Don't beat about the bush, what do you mean ?

WOLFE (*turning to JARVIS*). I mean, with that camelia in your possession you can laugh at them all—without it, there isn't a back street in Europe where you can hide your head, and I know 'em all. (*Moving c. to above settee.*) Nobody knows anything about this business, eh ?

JARVIS. Nobody.

WOLFE. What about Keble ? Keble, eh !

JARVIS. Keble knows only what I wish him to know. He knows nothing whatever about the diamond.

(*The bell rings.*)

Who the devil's that? (*Goes to window; looks cautiously out, suddenly drawing back into the room.*) Damn!

WOLFE (*anxiously*). Who is it? Who is it?

JARVIS. Bullivant. (*Down to c.*)

WOLFE. What's he doing up here?

JARVIS. I don't know. I left him busy investigating in the country.

WOLFE. Better stop him coming up.

JARVIS. That's all right. Keble knows. What the devil brings him up here?

WOLFE (*c.*). Investigating, eh?

(*WOLFE whistles meaningly.*)

JARVIS. What do you mean? What the devil's the matter with you? (*Coming to L.C. and meeting WOLFE.*)

WOLFE. That very clever old gentleman is looking for a diamond in the country. The diamond comes to London. A little while after that very clever old gentleman comes to London——

JARVIS. You think——?

WOLFE. I think that in looking for that diamond in the country that very clever old gentleman has discovered the slight mistake! (*Pause.*) Get that camelia—get that camelia!

JARVIS. What do you advise?

WOLFE (*firmly*). I advise you not to meet that very clever old gentleman. Don't forget he had the reputation of being the cleverest criminal lawyer of his day—and I advise you to *get* across the water as soon as you can, and have that stone cut up into tiny little pieces. You're in a tight corner. If you're not careful, you'll find yourself checkmated.

JARVIS (*pause*). I might prevent that by taking his queen.

WOLFE. What do you mean?

(*They are now facing each other.*)

JARVIS. That girl just now.

WOLFE. Oh, oh! We've come to her at last, 'ave we?

JARVIS. I have for some considerable time carefully cultivated her—shall I say—friendship? She's difficult—but she's interesting. She's very young—she likes me—she likes me very much. She's going to see me off at Dover.

WOLFE. Dover! Good old Dover.

JARVIS. Yes, and I hope to persuade her to go even farther. She's all the world to old Bullivant; he'd do any mortal thing—make any sacrifice rather——

WOLFE. Rather than she should be compromised, eh?

JARVIS. I'm hopeful, Wolfe, I'm hopeful.

WOLFE. You're colossal. (*Digging him in ribs.*)

(*KEBLE enters L. WOLFE goes up c.*)

KEBLE. Mr. Bullivant, sir.

JARVIS. But surely you sent him away? (*Going L. to KEBLE.*)

KEBLE. No, sir, I tried to do so, but he *insisted* on waiting. What shall I do?

JARVIS (*deliberately*). Keble, a message will arrive for me. It is of the utmost importance—vital, you understand, and remember I'm not in the house.

KEBLE. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT (*downstairs*). Is this the way! Please—please—some one——

(JARVIS *waves* KEBLE *off*. KEBLE *goes back to* MR. BULLIVANT.)

WOLFE (*hurriedly*). Don't meet him! Don't meet that old devil! He'll worm your very soul out of you. (*Hurries JARVIS off R.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*outside*). These stairs are very trying.

WOLFE (*points to door up R.*). Lie low. Get out as soon as you can, find Miss Bullivant, get the camelia, it's your only chance——

(JARVIS *quickly exits into the room R.* WOLFE *quickly goes to arm-chair, R.C., whips up a newspaper and reads.* MR. BULLIVANT *enters, wearing his hat and coat.* KEBLE *enters with him, following him C.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. I am perfectly sure Mr. Jarvis will not mind my waiting here. I feel somewhat fatigued. A little rest will do me good. (*Goes R., and takes off hat and puts it beside him on sofa.*)

KEBLE. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. It is uncertain when he will return?

KEBLE. Very uncertain, sir. Indeed, he might not return till to-morrow.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah! Oh, really! Not till to-morrow! Is this gentleman waiting here, too? (*Sinks into settee in front of fire.*)

KEBLE. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh dear, dear, fancy that, not till to-morrow. Thank you. That will do.

(KEBLE *is going when Wolfe stops him.*)

WOLFE. I beg your pardon—did I understand you to say Mr. Jarvis might not return till to-morrow?

KEBLE. Yes, sir.

WOLFE. You should 'a told me that before. It's no good my wasting my precious time here if he isn't coming back till to-morrow.

(*This is intended for MR. BULLIVANT, but that old gentleman only makes himself very comfortable in settee. He sits with his eyes closed—sleeps on settee and wheezes.*)

My lord! What's that?

KEBLE. It's the old gentleman, sir; he always does that when he's sleeping.

(WOLFE dismisses KEBLE—who exits—and going to MR. BULLIVANT speaks affably.)

WOLFE. I say, it's not much good our waiting; Mr. Jarvis isn't coming back till to-morrow.

MR. BULLIVANT. No, not till to-morrow. (*Opening his eyes, but not moving.*) Eh? Oh, no, no! not much good. (*Making himself more comfortable and again closing his eyes.*)

(WOLFE fidgets a moment or two, uncertain what to do, then, suddenly slapping his hand on his leg.)

WOLFE. Why, to be sure!—of course—the club! Why didn't I think of the club? (*Going over to fire-place.*) Do you know, sir, an idea's just struck me.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, fancy.

WOLFE. He'll be at his club.

MR. BULLIVANT (*waking up*). Eh?

WOLFE. Almost sure to be there. Yes, that's the place. I'll go—(*crosses to c.*)—down there—I'll go down to the club—that's where he'll be. (*Walks to door, but finds MR. BULLIVANT has not followed him—returns to c.*) Ah! Excuse me, sir. Er—you're anxious to see Mr. Jarvis, ain't you?

MR. BULLIVANT. Eh? Oh, yes—yes, I am rather anxious. (*Half asleep.*)

WOLFE. Well, he'll be at his club—I'm going down there.

MR. BULLIVANT. That will be nice for you, won't it?

WOLFE. Allow me, sir, to drive you down there.

MR. BULLIVANT. Drive me down where?

WOLFE (*scarcely concealing his irritation*). To his club. He'll be there—we shall catch him there.

MR. BULLIVANT. Catch who—where?

WOLFE. Mr. Jarvis!

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh! Oh yes—but, you know, I'm very comfortable in front o' the fire here.

WOLFE (*back of settee R.C.*). Er—yes, yes—I know, but I think we shall find Mr. Jarvis at his club.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, well, if you do, tell him I'm waiting for him here.

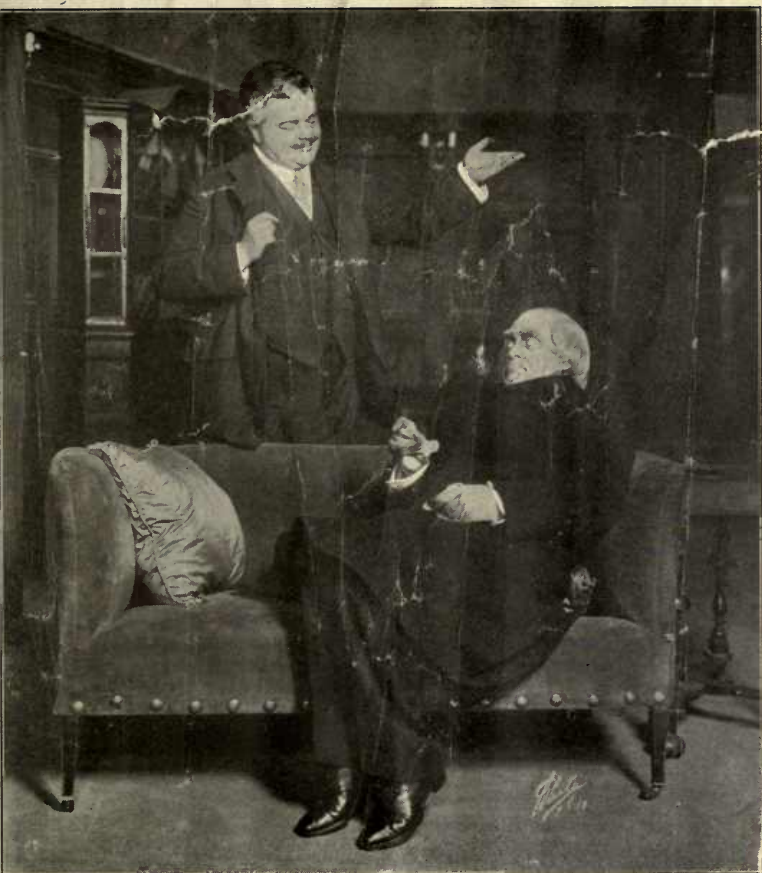
WOLFE (*suppressing his indignation*). Certainly—certainly, sir. (*Crosses to door, L.*) You nasty old blighter!

MR. BULLIVANT. What did you say?

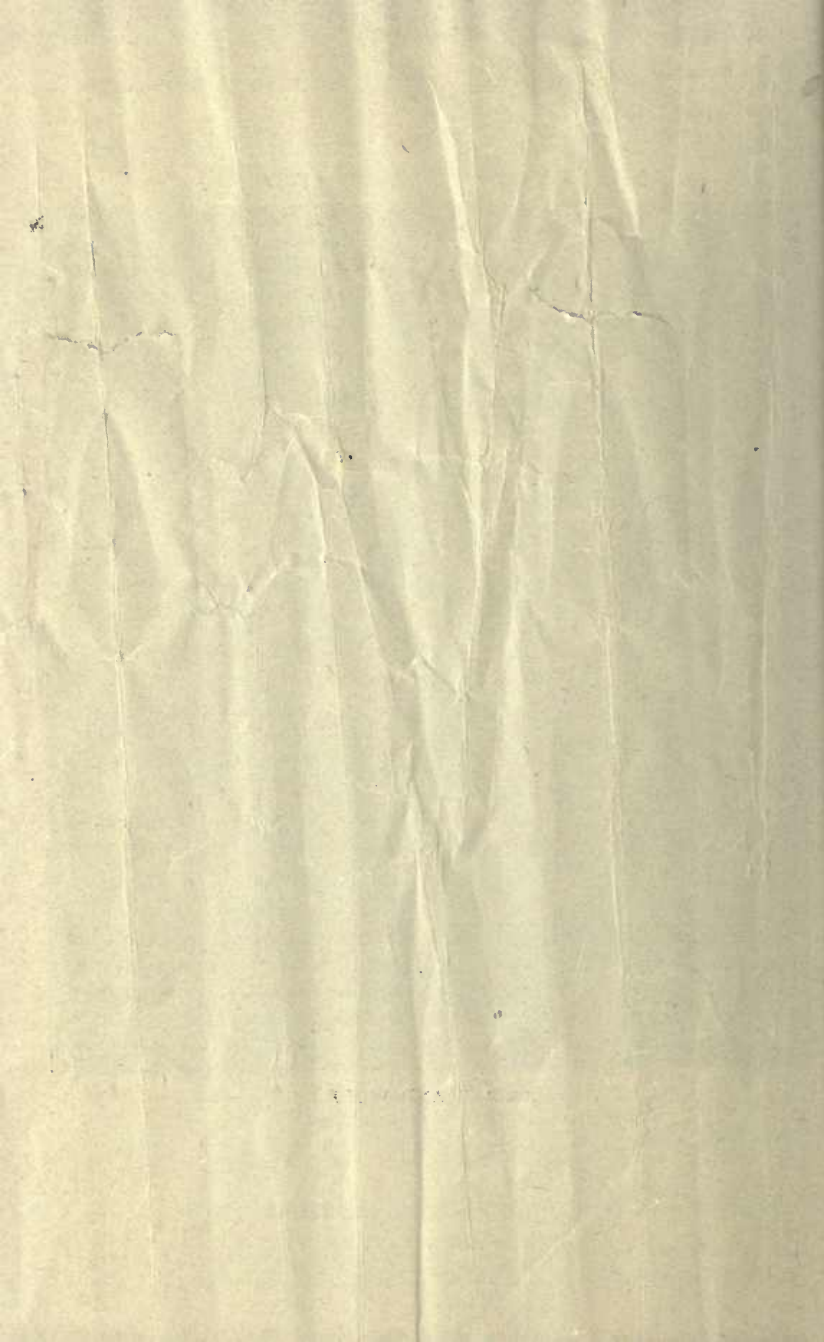
WOLFE. Have you got a lighter. (*At door.*) Good day, sir, good day.

(*As he is backing to door, L., he bumps into RUDDOCK—who enters.*)

(*Crosses L., at door.*) How do you do? (*Exits L., backing out of door.*) We have had such a nice little talk, haven't we? Good day,



GRUMPY AND WOLF



sir, good day to you, sir. Pleased to have met you—em—yes.

(Exits.)

(MR. BULLIVANT immediately wakes up.)

MR. BULLIVANT. Nice polite gentleman, Ruddock.

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Wouldn't think to look at him he was the greatest liar in London. And one of the cleverest men. His name is Wolfe—Valentine Wolfe—known among his intimates as Hanky Panky Wolfe. He is a dealer in antiques—uncharitable persons even whisper that he is a double-dealer in antiques. Why should this double-dealer want to see Mr. Jarvis? And why should he want me out of the way? Um! Ruddock, where is Miss Virginia? Why was she not at her aunt's? Don't like it, Ruddock; don't like it!

RUDDOCK (C.). The man's manner was odd, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Keble? Yes, I noticed that.

RUDDOCK. He didn't wish you to remain, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. No. Nobody wishes me to remain—and as everybody seems anxious for me to go, I'd better stay where I am.

(The bell rings below. MR. BULLIVANT indicates the window. RUDDOCK goes up and looks out.)

What's that bell, Ruddock? Just go and see, will you?

RUDDOCK. A special messenger, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah! Letter?

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Um—special messenger! Er—just go down—stairs, Ruddock, and contrive by accident to see what becomes of that letter.

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir. *(Goes off L.)*

MR. BULLIVANT is left alone. He wanders down the stage L., and listens at the door. Hears KEBLE on the stairs. He goes and sinks back into chair as though fast asleep, and wheezes. KEBLE enters. He at once notices the old man is nodding, so he very cautiously proceeds to cross to the bedroom with a letter in his hand. MR. BULLIVANT hears him and quickly shows that he suspects something. Out of the corner of his eye he watches KEBLE. Just as KEBLE is near the door, he speaks.)

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh—er—I beg your pardon—er—could you—what is your name?

KEBLE *(up R., placing the letter behind him)*. Keble, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Of course—of course—Keble. You were stopping at my place in the country, weren't you?

KEBLE. Yes, sir

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, I remember your face. (*Rising.*) Er—could you—er—are you in a hurry?

KEBLE. No, sir. (*A little anxious about his letter.*)

(MR. BULLIVANT is now watching him intently and trying to get a glimpse of the letter.)

MR. BULLIVANT. I see you have a letter there. I thought perhaps you might be wanting to take it to somebody.

KEBLE. Er—no, sir—it's not important.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah! Well, then, that's all right. Er—could you—would you be so good as to help me off with this coat? I feel the room a little warm.

KEBLE. Certainly, sir. (*Proceeds to help the old man, with the letter in his R. hand.*)

(MR. BULLIVANT keeps his eye on the letter, which, as KEBLE helps him get his coat off, comes almost over the old man's shoulder. He tries to look at it.)

MR. BULLIVANT. Thank you. I'm afraid I'm a great nuisance, but the room is warm. Bad thing to keep a coat on in the house—er—this—this letter—appears to be in the way. (*Trying to take it.*) Allow me—

KEBLE (*anxious*). Oh no, sir!

MR. BULLIVANT. Allow me. (*Takes the letter as soon as he gets L. arm out of sleeve.*)

(KEBLE a little taken unawares.)

That's better. Now we can get on better, can't we? (*The coat is off now.*) Ah, that's better! (*He hurries away round table L.C. pursued by KEBLE, who is trying to regain possession of the letter.*)

(MR. BULLIVANT wanders to fire-place with the letter.)

KEBLE (*who has put the coat down on chair R.C.*). The letter, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Eh?

KEBLE. The letter, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh yes, to be sure. How silly of me! The letter! (*Looking at it.*) For Mr. Jarvis, I see—and in my granddaughter's handwriting.

KEBLE. Indeed, sir!

MR. BULLIVANT. I wonder why. Why should my granddaughter be writing a letter to Mr. Jarvis?

KEBLE. I don't know, sir. I must ask you for the letter, sir. (*Trying to take it.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Don't be in a hurry, Keble. Don't be in a hurry. I'm rather interested in this letter. (*Suddenly.*) What's inside it?

KEBLE (*a little rudely*). I don't know, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah, that's a pity! Er—because I should rather like to know. (*He is now fumbling with the letter.*)

KEBLE. You're trying to open it, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Eh?

KEBLE (*firmly*). You're going to open that letter.

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes.

KEBLE. You've no right, sir, to open that letter.

MR. BULLIVANT (*sternly*). I'm a foolish, feeble old man, but I've got the devil's own will, and I mean to see what's inside this letter. (*Opening letter.*)

KEBLE. You won't.

MR. BULLIVANT. I will.

KEBLE. Give me that letter.

MR. BULLIVANT. I shall do nothing of the kind.

KEBLE. Then I shall take it from you.

MR. BULLIVANT. You will do nothing of the kind.

KEBLE. Oh, don't talk nonsense, sir. Give me that letter.

MR. BULLIVANT. You impudent scoundrel!

KEBLE. Oh, come here! (*Seizing the old man.*) Give it me!

He swings him violently round. MR. BULLIVANT staggers and falls back into the chair, holding the letter. There is a struggle, and though the old man retains the letter he is almost overcome by the rough treatment from KEBLE, who is now furious. KEBLE releases the old man and stands with his back to MR. BULLIVANT, hiding him from view of RUDDOCK, who enters.)

MR. BULLIVANT. I want to see what's in this letter. (*Dropping letter on floor R. of chair.*)

KEBLE (*roughly*). You must do nothing of the sort.

RUDDOCK. Who says so? (*Moving L.C. towards KEBLE.*)

KEBLE (*blustering*). I say so.

RUDDOCK (*gets C.*). Then say it downstairs—to—the black-beetles.

KEBLE. What! You—— (*He aims blow at RUDDOCK, who dodges it and simultaneously ejects KEBLE from room.*)

RUDDOCK (*firmly*). Downstairs!!

(*RUDDOCK, after watching KEBLE off, turns to MR. BULLIVANT.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*shows sudden feebleness*). Ruddock, the fellow nearly choked me.

RUDDOCK. What, sir!

(*MR. BULLIVANT leaning back and closing his eyes. RUDDOCK very anxiously watching him.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*getting rapidly more feeble*). Not so good with my fists as I used to be. (*Becomes almost unconscious.*)

(RUDDOCK is now divided between two emotions—his interest and intense affection for his master and his wild curiosity about the letter. He is anxiously watching the old man.)

RUDDOCK. Pull yourself together, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Can't you get me something? What do I generally have when I'm ill, Ruddock? Something stimulating. A little—barley water.

RUDDOCK (*is alarmed at the old man's condition*). Brandy—drop o' brandy—that's what you want.

MR. BULLIVANT (*a touch of the old irritability*). No—no alcohol—never touch it!

(RUDDOCK gets brandy from up stage; returns with the brandy. He rouses the old man and puts the glass to his lips.)

No—no—not brandy. No, no!

RUDDOCK. Take a little of this brandy, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. No, no!

RUDDOCK (*very sternly*). You've got to drink this brandy, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, Ruddock, you're unkind! No, I'd rather not! No—— (*The brandy is forced upon him. He drinks and chokes.*)

RUDDOCK. Don't drink too much, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT (*at last sinks back into his chair, panting and coughing. The spirit has its effect, and life begins to return. The old man's vigour from this moment gradually increases until the end of the ACT. He comes back to his senses first of all by a long, feeble sort of laugh*). Ah—ha, ha! I don't know what the devil you've given me, Ruddock, but I feel a wonderful deal better.

RUDDOCK. 'Course you do, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. I feel happy, Ruddock, very, very happy.

RUDDOCK. 'Course you do, sir—done you good.

MR. BULLIVANT (*gradually getting happy*). Of course I ought not to have had brandy, Ruddock; you know I make it a rule never to touch alcohol.

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. It's extra—it's—extraordinary the in—invigorating effect alcohol has upon the system, Ruddock.

RUDDOCK. Ahem! Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT (*loudly*). I feel I could walk forty miles, Ruddock!

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir—er—what was in the letter, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT (*rises*). Nothing like exercise. (*Tottering.*) Keeps you young. I suppose I'm too advanced in years to ride a bicycle? (*Going to fire-place.*)

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir. What have you done with the letter, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT (*vaguely*). The letter? What letter?

RUDDOCK. The letter to Mr. Jarvis.

MR. BULLIVANT. I got it from the valet. The scoundrel nearly choked me! Well, well, Ruddock, where is it?

RUDDOCK. Haven't you got it, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. Don't be foolish; if I had got it, should I ask you! Where is it? Where is it?

RUDDOCK. It was in your hand, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. When?

RUDDOCK. When I went for the brandy, sir. (*Looking on floor for letter.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. I've no recollection——

RUDDOCK (*seeing letter*). Here it is, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah! (*Taking it.*) Open—open—I don't remember—— (*Staggers.*)

(RUDDOCK catches him.)

All right. I'm all right. (*Reading.*) "I have changed my mind—I am not going with you to Dover"—going with him to Dover!—"I am going home. About the camelia—I now notice there is a hair round the stem. Whose hair? Is that why you were so anxious to have it back? If you want it you can fetch it."

RUDDOCK. The hair!

MR. BULLIVANT. Eh? (*Beginning to be quite himself again.*)

RUDDOCK. The hair round the camelia!

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes—it's still there, Ruddock—it's still there. But what does she mean about going with him to Dover? My God! What does she mean by that?

RUDDOCK. I don't like the look of it, sir. (*Takes letter.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Let me look at it again. Let me look at it again, Ruddock. (*Reads.*) "I have changed my mind."

(JARVIS comes quietly out of his room during this, and is crossing stealthily past window at back. MR. BULLIVANT pauses, his expression changes, his eyes gleam.)

"I am not going with you to—Dover." You're in the light, Ruddock! How can I see to read with your shadow on the letter?

(*At the same time JARVIS, realizing his mistake, stoops below the level of the window, and glides out of the room; he holds the door so that it is closed all but a few inches.*)

(*Continues reading.*) "I am going home. About the camelia—I now notice that there is a hair round the stem. Whose hair? Is that why you were so anxious to have it back? If you want it you can fetch it."

RUDDOCK. What are we to do now, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. We stay in London to be sure. I must see Mr. Jarvis before I go back. (*Emphatically.*) We shall stay in London till I find him.

RUDDOCK. But, sir——

MR. BULLIVANT. I shall not go home until I've found Mr. Jarvis.

(JARVIS silently closes the door L.)

RUDDOCK. But, sir, I don't understand——

MR. BULLIVANT (clutching RUDDOCK's arm). Don't be foolish, Ruddock!

(To the amazement of RUDDOCK—who begins to fear he has given him too much brandy—MR. BULLIVANT begins to hum the air of "The Spider and the Fly." Suddenly he breaks off in the middle of the tune.)

Don't be a fool, Ruddock! Look out of the window and see which way he's gone. (Goes to settee and picks up hat.)

RUDDOCK. Who, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. Look out of the window and see——

RUDDOCK (goes to window. As one who gives unexpected information). Mr. Jarvis!

MR. BULLIVANT (as he does so). You're in the light, Ruddock.

(RUDDOCK stares blankly at the old man.)

When I told you you were a—just now, you couldn't have been—now could you? (Bus.: Putting on coat.)

RUDDOCK. I thought not at the time, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Somebody was.

RUDDOCK (staring out of the window). Jarvis! Now he's gone——

MR. BULLIVANT. I wanted him to go.

RUDDOCK. Yes, but he knows Miss Virginia has got the camelia he knows she has taken it home. He'll go after it! He'll go there, too.

MR. BULLIVANT. That's where I wanted him to go. With me searching for him in here, he's perfectly safe in going there. Mr. Jarvis is no good to me without the camelia; the camelia is no good to me without Mr. Jarvis. If I get them together——

RUDDOCK. You get the diamond!

MR. BULLIVANT. Ruddock, you're brilliant! (Sings.) "Will you walk into my parlour, said the Spider to the Fly." (Business.)

(The CURTAIN falls.)

(ACT plays 30 minutes.)

ACT IV

The SCENE is the same as ACTS I and II.

(It is night time. When the curtain rises the stage is empty, then MERRIDEW, the servant, enters, holding door open, and VIRGINIA enters, having just arrived from London.)

MERRIDEW. We didn't expect you back to-night, Miss.

VIRGINIA. How is Mr. Ernest? *(Goes to below R. end of table and puts bag, hat and gloves on it.)*

MERRIDEW. Well, he's better, Miss, and—er—he isn't better.

VIRGINIA. What do you mean?

MERRIDEW. Well, Miss—he's—he's—— Well, soon after you left this morning, Miss—he—soon after the master left——

VIRGINIA. Mr. Bullivant went to London?

MERRIDEW. Yes, Miss; didn't you know?

VIRGINIA. No. Go on, tell me of Mr. Ernest.

MERRIDEW. Well, soon after the master left—Mr. Ernest suddenly got very much better——

VIRGINIA. Very much better. . . . Did he speak?

MERRIDEW. Well—er—yes, Miss, he did.

VIRGINIA. What did he say?

MERRIDEW. He seemed to have something on his mind.

VIRGINIA. Something on his mind?

MERRIDEW. And if I may say so, Miss, he used dreadful language.

VIRGINIA. Swore?

MERRIDEW. Something shocking, Miss.

VIRGINIA. Just like his old self, Merridew?

MERRIDEW. Yes, Miss.

VIRGINIA. Something on his mind, you say?

(A crash is heard off. Loud voices—then ERNEST'S voice is heard above all.)

ERNEST *(off)*. Clear out of this damned room.

(ERNEST enters, his head bandaged and a generally wild appearance. He is violently excited. The moment he enters he turns to the door, and shouts off.)

Clear out, I don't want any of you.

(SUSAN follows him on. VIRGINIA goes to him.)

VIRGINIA. Ernest—

ERNEST (*turning wildly on her*). Jinny! Tell 'em to go away—tell 'em to leave me alone.

VIRGINIA. Merridew, leave Mr. Ernest with me.

(MERRIDEW and SUSAN *exeunt* B. VIRGINIA leads ERNEST to a chair C.)

ERNEST (*exhausted—leaning back*. VIRGINIA *near him, below table* C.). I'm so heartily tired, Jinny—and yet I can't rest.

VIRGINIA (*kneels B. of him*). You must.

ERNEST. I can't—I mustn't—till I've found it.

VIRGINIA. Found what, dear?

ERNEST (*taking no notice of VIRGINIA*). The whole business will come out—I'm done!

VIRGINIA. Tell me, Ernest, what is it you mean?

ERNEST (*looking fixedly at her—putting his arms round her*). You—Virginia—little Jinny—you—I'd got it all quite clear in my mind—I was going to marry you—and we were going to work jolly hard and make heaps of money, and—now it's all gone!

VIRGINIA. What do you mean, Ernest?

ERNEST. When I arrived here last night I was in charge of a valuable diamond—when you'd all gone to bed I saw a shadow on the blind, then I saw an arm through that door—the lights went out—we struggled—I don't know—and to-day when I came to my senses—it's gone—!

VIRGINIA. The diamond—

ERNEST. My chief in London will send some one down here—sure to—"Well, Mr. Heron, where is the diamond?" "I've lost it!" (*Laughing wildly, rises, and goes to fire.*) Lost it! I wish to God the fellow had killed me, then there might have been some excuse.

VIRGINIA. Hush—hush—you must forget all this. (*Follows him.*)

ERNEST. Forget it! I wish to Heaven I could—if I could only forget it for a moment—just one or two minutes—a rest from it. (*Below R. end of table.*)

VIRGINIA. I'll make you forget.

ERNEST. Nothing will ever make me forget. (*Back to audience R.C.*)

VIRGINIA. Yes it shall. When I went to London to-day I went to a man's rooms—

ERNEST (*taking no notice*). When I'm asked "Where is the diamond?" and I have to say "I've lost it," it means I've lost everything worth living for!

VIRGINIA. The man made love to me. (*Going to him R.*)

ERNEST. Everything worth living for—gone!

VIRGINIA. The man made love to me. (*Another step forward.*)

ERNEST. If only Grumpy had put it in the safe. (*Gets to R.C.*)

VIRGINIA. A man made love to me, and I didn't stop him.

(*She is now below R. end of table.*)

ERNEST (*taking a step or so back before it breaks on him*). A man made love to you, and you allowed it?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

ERNEST. You didn't? (*Roughly.*)

VIRGINIA. I did—it was horrid of me, but I did!

(*Suddenly ERNEST has her in his arms, and holds her till she can hardly breathe.*)

ERNEST. If ever you dare to let a man make love to you again—I'll——

VIRGINIA (*gasping for breath*). Ernest!

ERNEST. You understand now?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

ERNEST. You'll be a good girl?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

ERNEST. No more tricks?

VIRGINIA. No.

ERNEST. That's right.

(*Pause.*)

ERNEST releases her—and grows moody again. VIRGINIA takes handkerchief out of her bag and camelia with it. The camelia falls on floor.)

What's that thing?

VIRGINIA. Oh, nothing. (*Crosses L.*)

ERNEST (*crossing L.*). His, I suppose?

VIRGINIA. Yes. (*She throws it towards the fire-place; it falls short and drops on the rug.*)

ERNEST. Better tell me all about it. (*Sits L.C.*)

VIRGINIA. Well—when I went to town he asked me to go and see him—and—and—I went, and when I got there—he was inclined to be sentimental.

ERNEST. Go on.

VIRGINIA. Well—then he was going away later—abroad—and asked me to go and see him off, and I said I would—and I meant to, but after I had left his rooms I changed my mind. (*During these two speeches she walks, agitatedly, round C. table.*)

ERNEST. Why?

VIRGINIA. Well, I did. (*Crosses L.*)

ERNEST. What made you?

VIRGINIA (*turning to him*). You—I thought of you—and I knew how horrid it all was of me. I cried in the train till I looked a sight,

and here I am and, oh, Ernest, do let's get married, and then I'll settle down. (*Goes to him and kneels L. of him.*)

ERNEST (*solemnly*). I wish to God we could get married.

VIRGINIA. Grumpy wants us to.

ERNEST. Grumpy?

VIRGINIA. Yes, he's always saying so.

ERNEST. Is he?

VIRGINIA. Yes, every night almost.

ERNEST. Saying he wants us to get married?

VIRGINIA. Not in so many words, but he means it.

ERNEST. What does he say, dear?

VIRGINIA. Well, every night when I am in his arms and he's kissing me good night, he says oh, what a—oh, what a—what a damned fool Ernest is.

ERNEST (*laughs, then after a pause the shutting of the hall door is heard*). What's that?

VIRGINIA. It must be Grumpy come back. (*Crosses below table and fetches hat and cloak and then up to door L.*) He mustn't see me. He thinks I'm at Aunt Sophie's. I shall have to explain and tell him everything. I don't feel I could do that just now. I'll go to my room—don't tell him where I am, Ernest. (*Going to door L., opens door with R. hand and lets it swing back behind.*)

ERNEST. He won't be angry.

VIRGINIA. He might be—

(*Both at door L.*)

You forgive me, Ernest?

(*She holds her hand out. ERNEST kisses it. She goes off. ERNEST is alone. He stands by the table as he was when alone in ACT I. He is thinking of the diamond, and carefully goes through the same actions as he did before the robbery. The door now quietly opens—ERNEST sees this, and is for a moment transfixed. Then JARVIS comes in.*)

ERNEST. Why, Mr. Jarvis. (*With a start.*)

JARVIS. I beg your pardon, I didn't—

ERNEST (*coming to himself*). Forgive me—er—how are you? I didn't know you were expected. You coming through the door at that moment—

JARVIS (*up to top of settee*). I'm not expected—and I shan't be here more than a few minutes, anyhow.

ERNEST. Surely you're not thinking of going back to-night?

JARVIS. Oh yes, I must. I'm going abroad by the early morning boat—I—(*crosses L.C.*)—was going to-night, but I want to see Miss Bullivant first—there's something I want to say to her before I go. They told me she was here.

ERNEST. Oh yes.

(JARVIS behind table L. end. MERRIDEW enters R., with a tray containing decanters and syphon.)

JARVIS. Mr. Bullivant is in London—isn't he?

ERNEST. Yes. He went this morning, and hasn't come back yet. (Comes down. To MERRIDEW.) Mr. Bullivant hasn't come back yet, has he?

MERRIDEW. No, sir.

(Puts whisky, etc., on L. of table C. and crosses below table, sees copy of "Daily Telegraph" lying on floor, picks it up, and puts it in music-cabinet; then he notices camelia lying on skin rug in front of fire, picks it up, and is about to throw it in the grate but there is no fire. He hesitates, and then seeing a bowl of white flowers on the table he puts it in among them, arranging them and moving them about a little so that the camelia is unnoticeable with the rest. This is unseen by the two men.)

ERNEST (to JARVIS). Cigarette?

JARVIS. No, thank you.

ERNEST. I must. I haven't had a smoke since——

JARVIS gives ERNEST a light. While MERRIDEW is putting the camelia into the bowl there is silence between the two men; ERNEST lighting his cigarette, JARVIS holding the match.)

I'm glad to have this chance of seeing you again. I've wanted to tell you how—er—very grateful I am for—— It was devilish good of you to—er—to do—what you did.

JARVIS. I merely did what——

ERNEST. Oh, I know. You were up all night—rushing here, there and everywhere—doctor and—it was good of you. And I say—if ever I can do anything for you, you know—and—er—er—well, you know.

(Exit MERRIDEW R.)

JARVIS. Thanks—yes.

(Pause.)

ERNEST (sits R., on settee). Deuced funny your coming in at that door, you know! I was—er—I was just standing by the window—as I did last night—an arm came through the door—nothing else—saw nothing else.

JARVIS. You saw nothing? (Is pouring himself out a drink.)

ERNEST. Nothing but the arm, and then, when you came through the door just now, it was—er—it was funny.

JARVIS. Yes.

ERNEST. But here am I talking all about myself. You—er—you want to see Miss Bullivant?

JARVIS. Well—yes—I did——

(Pause.)

ERNEST. She—er—she told me—something when she returned—I—er—expect it was you.

JARVIS (after a moment). What did she tell you?

ERNEST. Well, she told me that—er—— (Pause.) Do you know that Virginia and I are—er—well, we've made up our minds—we're—er—well, we're engaged.

JARVIS. I didn't know. (Drinks.)

ERNEST. Well, you've been so awfully decent to me that I thought I'd tell you. (Pause.) It's a bit rough on you, but—er—well, these things happen, don't they? And now I'm afraid your journey here has all been for nothing—and your time so short, too—I say, I am sorry.

JARVIS. It must have seemed rather odd to you, my coming at this time of night.

ERNEST. Oh, I understand. Besides, I don't think we stop to consider the time—in these cases—I—er—I'm a lucky beggar, ain't I? I'm sorry for you, but in a way I'm glad. It's good to know other men are keen—and—she's—she's ripping, isn't she?

JARVIS (gets c.) How did you know that I——?

ERNEST. Well—she—she told me.

JARVIS. Told you?

ERNEST. She didn't say who—but—well, I saw quite by accident a flower.

(This at once arrests JARVIS's attention.)

And—er—I asked her—and she—she told me. I didn't know, of course, that you—er——

JARVIS. What—what became of that flower? (Going to settee.)

ERNEST (carelessly). The flower, why I—— (Then suddenly serious.) Why—you're keen on it, eh? She threw it away.

JARVIS. Threw it away?

ERNEST. Yes—just there.

JARVIS (looking). Here? (Going over to fire-place.)

ERNEST. Must be there now.

JARVIS. No, it doesn't seem to be——

ERNEST. Some one must have taken it.

JARVIS. But—er—who?

ERNEST (almost unconsciously). Could Virginia——

JARVIS. You're sure it was here? (Still looking.)

ERNEST. Now, I wonder where the devil it can have got to! Virginia might have—I'll ask her—or p'raps you might like to ask her—(crosses up L.)—yourself.

JARVIS. Would you mind?

ERNEST. 'Course not.

JARVIS (*crossing R.*). I'd rather like to ask her for the flower myself if you're quite sure you don't mind. (*Exits R.*)

ERNEST (*stands a moment looking after him*). Poor beggar!
(*Turns and walks to where she threw camelia, and looks on the floor.*
MR. BULLIVANT *enters through window C., followed by RUDDOCK, who takes his hat.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Ernest! Down—madness! My dear boy, I can't tell you how glad I am. But this is madness. (*To RUDDOCK who is taking off his coat.*) What the devil are you doing with my coat?

(RUDDOCK *exits L. with coat and hat.*)

You must have quiet. Rest and quiet. (*Going down to door R.*)

ERNEST. There's no quiet for me, sir—you know I've lost the diamond.

MR. BULLIVANT. Eh? Yes, yes, I know. Where is Virginia?
(*At door—opening it.*)

ERNEST. You don't realize, sir—I've lost the diamond.

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, I do. Where is Virginia?

ERNEST. She was here a moment ago—she ran away—afraid to meet you.

MR. BULLIVANT. Afraid to meet me? (*Comes C.*)

ERNEST. Well, she's been in one of her scrapes, you know, and oh, it wasn't anything serious—and she's very repentant—it was the merest flirtation. She simply got to the faded flower stage.

MR. BULLIVANT. Faded flower? (*Above table.*)

ERNEST. Well, she had a flower of his in her bag.

MR. BULLIVANT (*very anxious*). Yes, yes—was it—er—what sort of flower was it?

ERNEST. Er—a camelia!

MR. BULLIVANT (*scarcely able to speak*). Camelia—did you say camelia?

ERNEST. Yes.

MR. BULLIVANT. Where is it now? (*Going L.*)

ERNEST. Er—she—er—(*looking towards fire-place*)—threw it over here.

MR. BULLIVANT (*hurriedly going to fire-place and searching*). Over here? You're sure she threw it here?

ERNEST. Yes, but—er—— (*Crosses to R.C.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Somebody must have moved it.

ERNEST. Yes, but there was nothing at all serious. Virginia told me all about it.

MR. BULLIVANT. Somebody must have—who's been here? Ah!
(*He sees decanters on the table.*) That ass Merridew! He's been in here, hasn't he? With the whisky and soda. (*Going up C.*)

ERNEST. Yes—but, sir, you're not going to be angry with Virginia about—

MR. BULLIVANT (to ERNEST). Here, find Merridew.

ERNEST. But I assure you——

MR. BULLIVANT. Do as I tell you, send Merridew to me. (Uf c.) Ruddock! Ruddock! Where the devil do they all get to?

(ERNEST exits. MR. BULLIVANT starts searching for the camelia, goes to coal-box, then fire-place, lifts up rug, turns paper out of paper-cabinet, then up to easy-chair, then over to table, empties waste-paper basket on to table, then pulls out chair in front of table, gets on his knees, looks under table. As he is doing this JARVIS enters. MR. BULLIVANT hides behind table, but after a second gets up on his knees and watches him over table. JARVIS searches settee, and is just going to table when he comes face to face with MR. BULLIVANT. They stare blankly at each other for a moment.)

(Blandly, without rising). Ah, Mr. Jarvis. Charmed! Charmed! Looking for something, weren't you?

JARVIS (surprised, but assuming pleasure at meeting him). Mr. Bullivant! I'd no idea—I thought—I've just been told you were in London.

MR. BULLIVANT. So I was, but I came back to look for something—so glad I'm here in time to—to welcome you. You've paid me a great compliment, Mr. Jarvis. No sooner do you leave us than you return. Charming of you.

JARVIS. I really must apologize for——

MR. BULLIVANT. Not at all—not at all—it must have been something very important for you to come all this way for it.

JARVIS (decidedly). Well, yes, it was.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah, I thought so.

JARVIS. When I got back to town I missed—a—a little souvenir—it was of no value to anyone except to myself—matter of sentiment, you know——

MR. BULLIVANT. Charming—sentiment so rare and refreshing in these days—so you came back to look for it yourself instead of writing and having busybodies prying into your romance—eh?

JARVIS. Yes, yes, that's it.

MR. BULLIVANT. Charming—charming, so here we are, you and I, both looking for something.

During the foregoing they both look around for the camelia, trying to hide the fact from each other. They finish close to table L. By this time JARVIS has taken up the bowl which contains the flower from the table. MERRIDEW now enters R.)

(Seeing MERRIDEW—instantly). When you were in this room just now, did you see anything on the floor?

(JARVIS, with bowl in his hand, listens eagerly.)

MERRIDEW (R.). Oh, a—a—camelia, sir.

JARVIS (L. *Staring at MERRIDEW*). Yes.

MR. BULLIVANT (C. *Looks at JARVIS, then to MERRIDEW*). Yes.
yes.

MERRIDEW. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. What did you do with it?

MERRIDEW (*a little nervous*). I—er—I—

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, yes, come, quick! What did you do with it?

MERRIDEW (*desperately*). I put it in that bowl, sir. (*Pointing to bowl in JARVIS's hand.*)

(*In an instant JARVIS has his hand in the bowl. At the same moment MR. BULLIVANT hits the bowl out of JARVIS's hand, and it falls to the ground and breaks into pieces. The flowers are scattered about the floor. Like lightning they both make a dash at them, MR. BULLIVANT getting the camelia. As JARVIS grabs for it MR. BULLIVANT quickly puts it behind his back.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*smiling*). Oh, oh, Mr. Jarvis—oh no! Findings keepings!

(*JARVIS stands sullenly—unable to do or say anything.*)

Don't go, Merridew.

(*JARVIS makes a move for the window.*)

Merridew! After him—quick!

(*Enter DAWSON C., meeting JARVIS.*)

Tell Mr. Ernest I wish to see him.

(*MERRIDEW opens door R. ERNEST enters.*)

(*To DAWSON.*) Tell Miss Virginia and her maid Susan to come to me. Ah, there you are, Ernest. Sit down!

(*MERRIDEW stands C., by window; DAWSON goes L. and opens door, is met by VIRGINIA coming on; she enters wonderingly.*)

VIRGINIA (*seeing JARVIS*). Mr. Jarvis, why, when—

MR. BULLIVANT (*who has gone to table and is sitting down. To VIRGINIA*). Hush!

(*SUSAN enters L. DAWSON exits L.*)

(*Seeing SUSAN—producing the camelia from behind his back.*)
Susan—

(*SUSAN comes forward a little.*)

Is this the camelia you gave Mr. Ernest last night?

SUSAN (*looking close at it*). Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. You're sure!

SUSAN. Quite sure.

MR. BULLIVANT. That will do.

(SUSAN *exits* L.).

Ernest!

(ERNEST *rises and goes to* MR. BULLIVANT.)

Is this the camelia Susan gave you last night?

ERNEST. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. You're sure!

ERNEST. Quite sure.

MR. BULLIVANT. That will do.

(ERNEST *sits on settee again*.)

Virginia——

(VIRGINIA *goes to him*.)

Is this the camelia you had from Mr. Jarvis this morning?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

MR. BULLIVANT. You're sure?

VIRGINIA. Quite sure.

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah! That will do. (*Looking pleasantly round at them all.*) This is really very interesting. Virginia, my dear——

VIRGINIA. "My dear"—something serious!

MR. BULLIVANT. Tell Ruddock I want him. I think you will find him in my room.

(VIRGINIA *goes out*.)

Ernest, I wish to speak to Mr. Jarvis alone. Merridew, don't go.

(MERRIDEW, *who was going off* L.—*stops*.)

Wait outside the window.

(MERRIDEW *is going*.)

Merridew, quite close outside the window.

(ERNEST *goes out*.)

MERRIDEW. Yes, sir. (*Goes out and closes window after him.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Now, Mr. Jarvis, where did you get this camelia from?

JARVIS. You—er—you must give me a moment—— (*Leaning on mantelpiece.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*cheerfully*). Oh, there's plenty of time—it's not yet midnight.

JARVIS. I—er—I want to think——



MR. BULLIVANT (*pleasantly*). Yes. Won't you sit down?

(JARVIS *makes movement as if to strike him.*)

(*Long pause.*)

You don't seem able to tell me what you think. Shall I tell you what I think? Under the cloak of my hospitality you creep into my house. You rob, with violence, a member of my family, and in order to shield yourself for that crime you attempt to compromise one who is dear to me. For that the law gives me no redress—for this robbery, however, I can treat you as I should any other ruffian who enters my house with felonious intent—I can hand you over to the police—

(RUDDOCK *enters L.*)

What the devil do you want?

(RUDDOCK *holds up slippers for him to see—R. of him. Is on his knees taking off MR. BULLIVANT'S boots and putting on slippers during following scene.*)

Talking of the police; I have something interesting to tell you. After I left your rooms this afternoon—

(RUDDOCK *is untying his boots.*)

—take care, Ruddock, take care—I called at Scotland Yard—take care, Ruddock, take care—to make a few inquiries—oh, Ruddock!—(*Striking him on the head as he removes boot.*)—and found, as I suspected, that you were known. Mr. Jarvis was known, wasn't he, Ruddock?

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, you were known, Mr. Jarvis. Yes—and—there was something else they told us about Mr. Jarvis. What was it, Ruddock, what was it?

RUDDOCK. He was wanted, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. He was what?

RUDDOCK. He was wanted, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Oh, of course—of course—you were wanted, Mr. Jarvis. Yes, you were wanted for some little affair in—er—in—~~er~~—where was it, Ruddock?

RUDDOCK. Manchester, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Of course—of course—yes—in Manchester.

(*The clock strikes twelve as in ACT I; as it strikes VIRGINIA enters.*)

VIRGINIA (*at the door—laughing*). Philippine, Mr. Jarvis. Philippine. I've won; it's to-morrow. (*Goes forward to him—smiling.*)

JARVIS. So it is. You've won after all.

VIRGINIA. Yes. I told you I should.

(MR. BULLIVANT *with a gesture calls VIRGINIA to him.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. Philippine! Ah, charming—many a time in the old days—ah, yes—so you've lost, eh? Ah—ah, Mr. Jarvis—don't be downhearted—I always used to lose; many a pair of gloves—or—or—bouquets have I presented to the fair ones. Sometimes—*(slowly and carefully)*—sometimes it might even be a little bit of—er—jewellery.

(Pause.)

You follow me?

(Pause.)

No? Oh, you don't follow me. Ah—pity! We were speaking of—er—Manchester, and the more I think of Manchester the more vividly I remember how eager those friends of yours were to see you again.

(Pause.)

If you should meet—and they were to—er—discover in your possession any—er—anything you might find it difficult to account for it would be—er—awkward, wouldn't it?

VIRGINIA (*who is puzzled*). Grumpy! What are you—?

MR. BULLIVANT (*reproving her for interrupting*). My dear, my dear. You follow me? Of course, Manchester is no concern of mine, and if by chance you have anything you didn't feel quite comfortable about—and—er—you felt you'd like to get rid of it—of course—Virginia has won, hasn't she? And—*(meaningly)*—neither Mr. Heron nor I have any desire to mention that it has gone astray.

(Pause.)

(JARVIS *smiles knowingly.*)

Follow me? I knew it. I can see it in your eye. You follow me now?

(JARVIS, *after a slight pause, makes a move to the window. RUDDOCK moves in front of it—bus.*)

JARVIS. Perfectly. (*Accepting the situation he takes the packet containing the diamond out of his pocket; he assumes an air of easy politeness, and speaks to Virginia as if nothing unusual had occurred. Crosses to below L. end of table.*) And now, Miss Bullivant—about that Philippine—of course, I knew all along that you were sure to win, and I made up my mind what my forfeit should be. I hope you'll like it—but I'm going to ask you not to look at it until after I'm gone. Here it is!

MR. BULLIVANT. I'll take care of it till then. (*Takes diamond, then hands camelia to JARVIS.*) Philippine! (*Crosses behind table to lamp L.*)

VIRGINIA (*wondering and half laughing*). How mysterious—you know what it is, Grumpy? Thank you, Mr. Jarvis—but, really, I—I don't understand.

JARVIS. Oh, Mr. Bullivant will explain—won't you, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes, I'll explain—I'll explain! (*Pause, then most affably.*) Do you know, you're looking er—worn. A little tired. (*Coming round below JARVIS to R. side of him.*) Eh? Ah—so am I. We won't either of us be able to run about as we used to do, shall we? (*He signals to RUDDOCK.*)

RUDDOCK. Nothing more you wish to ask Mr. Jarvis, sir?

MR. BULLIVANT (*is below table c.—severely*). Ruddock—on more than one occasion I've had reason to speak to you about this habit of yours of breaking in when I'm talking to a—to a gent— (*To JARVIS.*) Well, no, Mr. Jarvis, I don't think there is anything more.

JARVIS. Ah! (*Crosses R.*) Then I'm just in nice time to catch that last train. (*Puts the camelia in his buttonhole and turns to VIRGINIA.*) Would you mind fastening this in for me?

VIRGINIA (*a little embarrassed*). I don't think I have a pin.

MR. BULLIVANT (*pleasantly, but very firmly*). She hasn't a pin, Mr. Jarvis. (*He draws VIRGINIA to him, and then crosses to fire-place.*)

JARVIS (*meets ERNEST as he enters*). Good night.

ERNEST. Going?

JARVIS. Yes.

ERNEST. When shall we see you again?

JARVIS (*looking significantly at switches—bus.*). I wonder;

(JARVIS exits R. ERNEST sits R. RUDDOCK follows JARVIS off.)

VIRGINIA. What's it all mean, Grumpy?

(*The old man turns slowly and regards VIRGINIA severely.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. I'm very angry with you. (*At fire-place.*)

VIRGINIA (*a little anxious*). Grumpy.

MR. BULLIVANT. I'm very angry with you indeed.

VIRGINIA. Grumpy!

MR. BULLIVANT. A very little more, Miss Virginia, and off you go to bed.

VIRGINIA. Oh, Grumpy! My Philippine. You can give it me now—he's gone. What is it?

MR. BULLIVANT (*as he hands her the little packet*). It's a diamond, my dear.

VIRGINIA. A diamond! Oh, but I can't take—(*the truth begins to*

dawn on her)—and Mr. Jarvis had it—it's—it's Ernest's diamond—
(*Going to ERNEST who takes it; she turns and goes back to Mr. BULLIVANT.*)

ERNEST (*excitedly*). The diamond!! (*To Mr. BULLIVANT.*)
You've found it!

MR. BULLIVANT. Yes. And the next time perhaps you'll put it
in the safe. (*Sitting chair L.*)

VIRGINIA. Mr. Jarvis had it—and it's all been through my
silly—

ERNEST. Jarvis! Jarvis! (*To Mr. BULLIVANT.*) And you've
let him go!

(*The door is heard to bang.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. That's the front door—

VIRGINIA. He's gone—

ERNEST. Gone!

(*ERNEST and VIRGINIA rush up to window and look off.*)

Yes—there he is.

VIRGINIA. There's some one with him.

MR. BULLIVANT. Met a friend perhaps.

ERNEST. A man's got hold of his arm—

MR. BULLIVANT. Ah—old friend perhaps—does he look as if he
came from Manchester?

VIRGINIA. There's another man at the door of the cab. They've
all driven off—what does it mean? (*Down to Mr. BULLIVANT on
his R.*)

(*ERNEST on his L.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*his eyes closed*). Poor devil, poor devil! Come
here, my dears. (*Takes both their hands.*) Bless you, my dears, bless
you. (*Sleeps and wheezes.*)

VIRGINIA (*in a whisper—winding up watch*). Tired out! Kittens!

ERNEST. But the diamond?

VIRGINIA. Hush—I'll tell you later. (*Going to C.*)

ERNEST (*following and detaining her*). To-morrow morning you
order your togs—next week you try 'em on—week after the alter-
ations are made, and the week after—you're married.

VIRGINIA. Who to?

(*He stoops and kisses her.*)

(*RUDDOCK enters R.*)

Here's Ruddock to take Grumpy to bed. (*She goes softly down to
RUDDOCK, below settles.*) He's tired out—you'd better get him

straight off to bed, Ruddock, and when he's in his room, Mr. Ernest and I will run in and say good night.

RUDDOCK. Yes, Miss. (*Crossing to L., putting chair in place.*)

VIRGINIA (*whispering to RUDDOCK*). He's very kittenish, Ruddock.

RUDDOCK. He's very tired, Miss.

(*ERNEST and VIRGINIA go off. RUDDOCK crosses and moves chair below table, then goes to MR. BULLIVANT and knocks him twice on shoulder, and then gives him a smart tap on the hand. MR. BULLIVANT wakes up with a start.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. What the devil are you slapping me for? (*Rubs hand.*)

RUDDOCK. Bedtime, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Well, that's no reason why you should slap me. What time is it?

RUDDOCK. Past twelve, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. I ought not to be up so late, Ruddock.

RUDDOCK. No, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Everybody gone to bed?

RUDDOCK. No, Mr. Ernest and Miss Virginia are still up, sir.

(*A pleasant smile comes over the old man's face.*)

MR. BULLIVANT. There's something I wanted to tell you, Ruddock. Something important, something very——

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir—in the morning, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. No, not in the morning—now. I want to tell you now. Help me on to my feet. Straighten me out. Shove me in the back!

(*RUDDOCK does so and pats him as in ACT I.*)

Don't pat me. What the devil are you patting me for? Oh, what was it I wanted to tell you? Something very important, something very——

RUDDOCK. In the morning, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. If you dare say that again I'll—oh, I know, Ruddock—Ernest—Ernest and Miss Virginia——

(*RUDDOCK smiles.*)

Ah—you've noticed it?

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir.

MR. BULLIVANT. Dear old Ruddock—we've always wanted it, Ruddock, haven't we?

RUDDOCK. Yes, sir. (*Goes and opens door L. and returns.*)

MR. BULLIVANT (*confidentially, after looking round*). God bless

the dear young things. I'm so glad they've made up their minds. (*Then, as they are going through the door.*) Oh dear, oh dear, I don't know how I'm going to get up the stairs. Oh, about that chimney of mine—did you tell the birds? (*As they pass through the door.*)

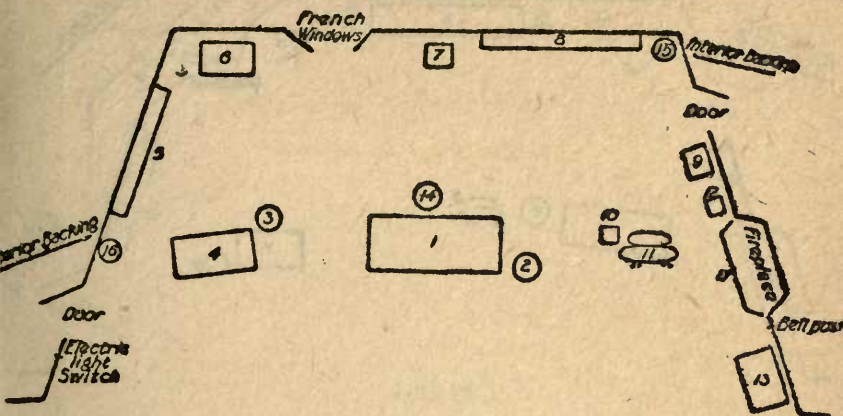
(*The CURTAIN falls.*)

The ACT plays 24 minutes.

GRUMPY

Acts I, 2 and 4

Garden Backing



EXPLANATION.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Table.
 2. Small chair.
 3. Small round table for syphons.
 4. Settee.
 5. Bookcase.
 6. Table.
 7. Camelia plant in pot on stand.
 8. Bookcase.
 9. Safe.</p> | <p>10. Small table for reading-lamp.
 11. Arm-chair.
 12. Coal-box.
 13. Stand for music and papers.
 14. }
 15. } Small chairs.
 16. }
 17. Fender, fire-irons and dogs.</p> |
|--|---|

PROPERTIES.

ACTS I AND II.

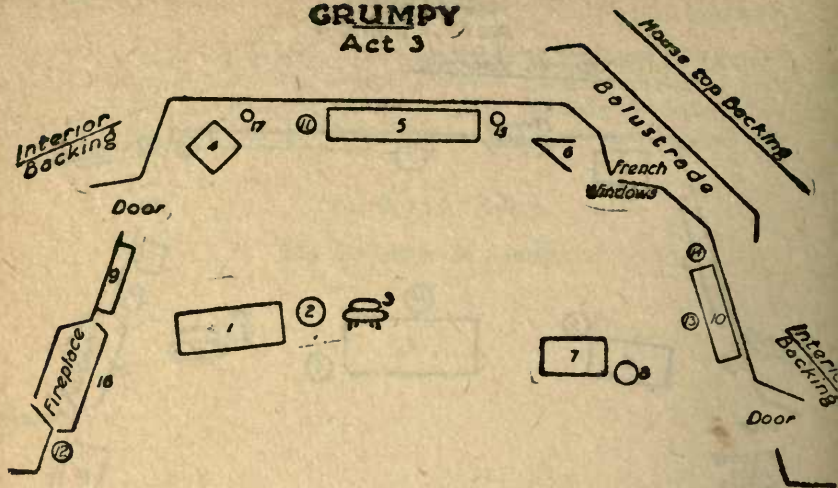
Curtains to draw at French windows.
 Blind to draw at French windows.
 Whisky syphon and glasses on No. 3 table.
 Bell under stage.
 Bell off L.
 Candlestick, matches, cap, off L.
 Dressing-gown off L., and slippers.
 Small bag off R.
 Bradshaw, pencil and magnifying glass, on table C.
 Diamond, tobacco, pipe, matches, for ERNEST.
 Camelia for JARVIS.
 Flowers on table C.

Mirror on mantelpiece.
 Camelia in cigarette-box for RUDDOCK.
 Faded camelia for JARVIS.
 Salver with coffee, baked apple, and cup and saucer and plate—2 spoons off R.
 Coat and hat, off L., for GRUMPY.
 Motor-horn ready off R.
 Cushion on settee R.
 4 camelias on tree (for Act II.).
 Shawl on table up R.C. (for Act II.).
 Curtains back and windows open (for Act II.).
 Poker and tongs off dogs (for Act II.).
 Dogs knocked over (for Act II.).

LIGHTING.

This scene should not be very light. Red in footlights with whites.
 Lights to work with switch below door.

GRUMPY Act 3



EXPLANATION.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Settee.
 2. Small table.
 3. Arm-chair.
 4. Table.
 5. Cabinet.
 6. Screen.
 7. Table.
 8. Chair.
 9. Bookcase.</p> | <p>10. Writing-table and bookcase.
 11. }
 12. } Small chairs.
 13. }
 14.
 15. Palm on stand.
 16. Brass fender and fire-irons.
 17. Standard Lamp.</p> |
|---|--|

PROPERTIES.

ACT III.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Tantalus.
 Siphon of soda
 2 glasses.
 Diamond for JARVIS.
 2 cigarettes for JARVIS.
 Written letter and camelia for KEBLE.
 Flowers in tissue paper on table R.C.
 Daily Telegraph on table R.C.</p> | <p>Rose-bowl and jug of water on desk up
 c.
 Ash-tray and matches on mantelpiece.
 Ash-tray on table L.
 Handkerchief for KEBLE.
 Door bell ready.
 Cushion on settee R.</p> |
|--|---|

LIGHTING.

Lights full up throughout.

ACT IV.

Whisky syphon, glasses on tray, off **R.**

Faded camelia for VIRGINIA, in bag.

Bells as in Act I.

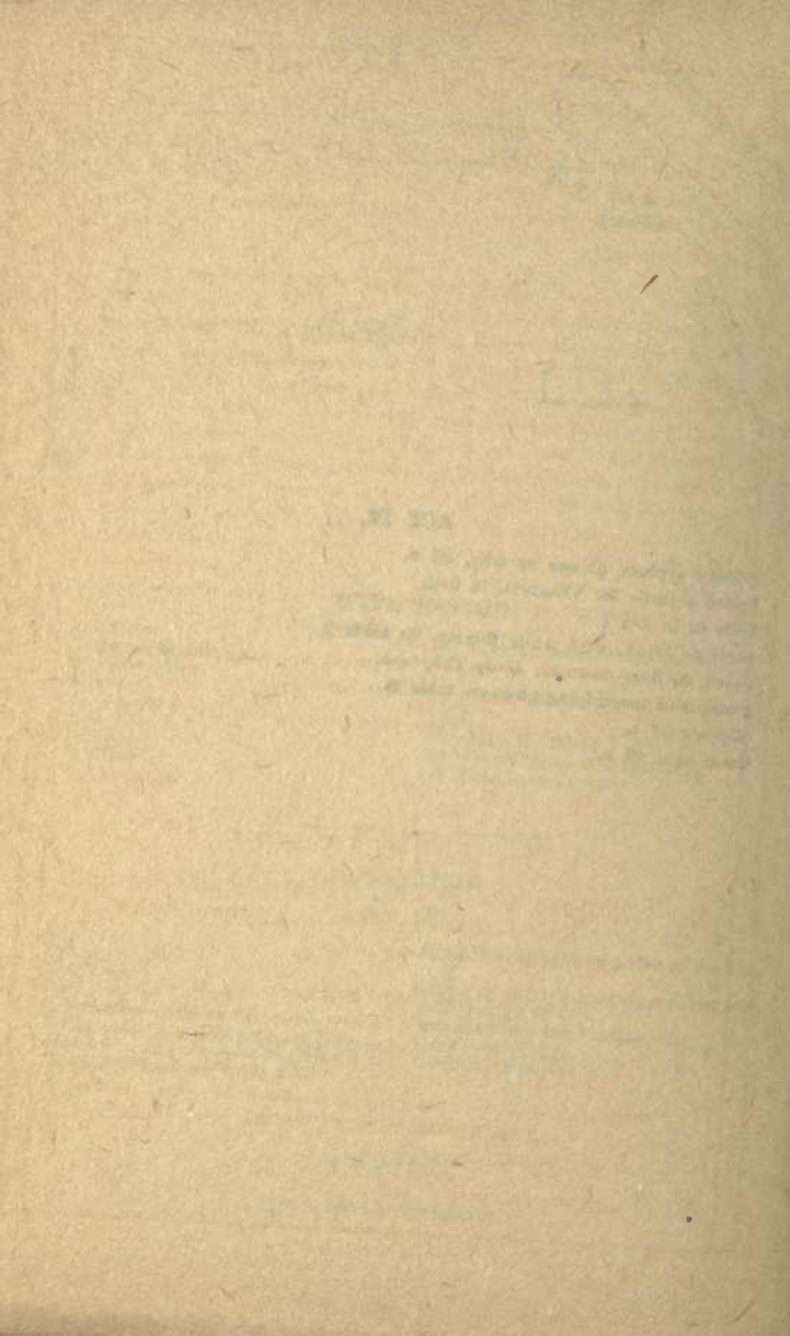
Bowl to break, with white flowers, on table **L.**

Paper on floor down **L.**, *Daily Telegraph*.

Pencil and magnifying glass on table **R.**

Slippers off **L.**

Door slam off **R.**



HOTEL UNIVERSE

Play without intermission by Philip Barry. Produced originally by the Theatre Guild at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York. 5 males, 4 females. 1 exterior scene. Modern costumes.

One of the most striking and original plays ever written by an American, and on the occasion of its production in New York it aroused heated controversy. It is the most ambitious and brilliant play Mr. Barry has ever attempted, and is concerned with the baffling problems which every adult human being is at some time forced to face. The characters seem hardly to exist at all in relation to other people, which is surely the reason why Mr. Barry discovered (some-what as Chekov discovered) that to invent a plot for them would be to deprive them of the kind of reality he was after. These people are essentially introspective, centripetal, literally self-seeking. And what are they after? Just an answer to the question that every thinking human being must ask himself—and vainly: What is life? What is death? Where are we going, and why? What is the meaning of past, present and future? Published only in bound form.

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Comedy in 3 acts. By Eden Phillpotts. Produced originally by Charles Coburn in New York City. 9 males, 13 females. 2 interiors. Modern costumes.

This delightful comedy of English people was one of the long run successes in London before coming to New York. The story is concerned with Samuel Sweetland, a Devonshire farmer and a widower, who decides to marry again. Aided and abetted by his housekeeper, Araminta, he makes out a list of the various eligible women in the county and proposes to them in turn. But they all refuse him, and in the end he finds at home, in Araminta, the one woman.

(Royalty on application.) PRICE 75 CENTS.

REBOUND

Comedy in 3 acts. By Donald Ogden Stewart. Produced originally by Arthur Hopkins at the Plymouth Theatre, New York. 7 males, 5 females. Modern costumes.

Sara Jaffrey is twenty-eight, pretty, charming but unmarried—when we first meet her in the home of her sister, Mrs. Crawford. Bill Truesdale is much in love with Evie Lawrence, but she throws him over for the rich Lyman Patterson. Sara and Bill immediately become engaged and are married shortly after.

We next find them on their honeymoon in Paris, where Bill is beginning to show early symptoms of being a neglectful husband—even failing to show up to meet Sara's father. It appears that Evie and Lyman have turned up in Paris on their wedding tour and Bill has been spending the truant time with his old love. This devotion to Evie grows into alarming proportions despite Sara's pleading with Bill until she realizes love is not a thing to be begged for but a thing to command. She switches her methods and Bill rebounds back to her arms with every indication of being a devoted husband.

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THE ROYAL FAMILY

Comedy in 3 acts. By George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber. Produced originally by Jed Harris at the Selwyn Theatre, New York. 11 males, 6 females. 1 interior. Modern costumes.

A tremendously interesting and fascinating story of a great family of the American stage. The Cavendishes, with which "The Royal Family" concerns itself, comprises three generations. First, there is Fanny Cavendish, wife of the deceased Aubrey Cavendish, "the first actor of his day," who at seventy is planning her tour for the coming season. There is her brother, Herbert Dean, a pompous player now in his decline; Julie, her daughter, is at the crest of her career as a Broadway star, Tony, her son, having forsaken the stage for Hollywood, rushes home only to flee to Europe to escape the attention of a Polish picture actress. Soon he is back again in New York seeking refuge from a lovesick Balkan princess. A granddaughter, Gwen, just building into important ingenue roles, jolts the family by marrying a non-professional and forsaking the stage, but only temporarily. Through it all, Fanny Cavendish rules the household with her courage and a sharp tongue. Though her children are idols to the public, they are defenseless under the withering fire of the old lady's sarcasm.

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BERKELEY SQUARE

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